OVID'S PYGMALION MYTH: CONCEPTIONS OF THE IMAGE IN GREEK MYTH AND PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to examine Ovid's Pygmalion myth in light of the mythic and philosophic conventions that he inherits. Outlining the mythic tradition set forth by the Greeks will illuminate the patterns established and in this way help identify the elements Ovid adheres to, but also changes in his myth about Pygmalion. The centrality of the image within ancient Greek myths reflects a deep cultural interest in artistic representation and provides a window into the status of art within Greek society. The myths of the ancient Greeks express an inherent interest in mimetic, or imitative, art. Their experiments within the artistic mediums of statues, paintings and natural reflections establish a preoccupation with art and this interest manifests itself in their myths. J. J. Pollitt establishes four authorities, or sources, for studying ancient art: historians, poets, philosophers and artists themselves.[1] However, myth as a source is curiously excluded from this list and stands as an under-utilized resource in assessing the status of art in ancient Greece. Without surveying myths that prominently feature art, our ability to understand the cultural conception of the image is severely limited. For the ancient Greeks, myth served as a pseudo-currency that had the ability to transcend the barriers between people from varying stations of life.[2] Their myths defined and addressed all aspects of daily life and acted as a way to mediate discussions about topics that were constantly changing. In terms of art within Greek society, myths provide insight into the conceptions of the image during this time period.

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[1] J.J. Pollitt, *The Art of Ancient Greece: Sources and Documents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6-7. Pollitt actually labels his categories compilers of tradition, literary analogists, moral aestheticians, and artists, but I simplified the categories to more accurately reflect the authors he cites as examples.

[2] Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), x.

This fascination with the image also manifested itself in Greek philosophy and the concept of mimetic art features notably in the philosophy of Plato's *Republic*. The second chapter explores Plato's comments about mimetic art. He took a philosophical interest in the visual image as such, and in the *Republic* he presents the city-formation as analogous, in many ways, to the art of painting. As I will argue, Ovid's account of the Pygmalion story draws from both mythic and philosophical traditions. This dual legacy is important not only for Ovid's version, but for later reception of Ovid's version as well.

CHAPTER ONE
THE IMAGE IN MYTH: CATALOG OF IMAGES IN MYTHS

Greek myth seems to focus largely on matters concerning gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, and monsters with supernatural powers. However, an important and recurring feature in Greek myth is the image. For example, in the myth of Perseus, the hero cannot look directly at Medusa, but must regard her through the reflected image on his bronze shield. Additionally, the cult statue of Athena – the Palladion – features prominently in the story of the sack of Troy during the Trojan War. Homer sometimes refers to these art objects, especially representational objects, as "*thauma idesthai*" ("a wonder to behold"). This idea of a wondrous object occurs, for example, when Achilles sees the beautiful landscape scene crafted by the god Hephaistos on his new shield. Other images in the mythic tradition had a reputation for a hyperrealism that was capable of deceiving animals. Daedalus, for example, constructed a life-like cow so that Queen Pasiphae could mate with the bull that she loved. And Zeuxis was renowned for painting a still-life scene that enticed birds to peck at the grapes. It is hardly surprising that images are such a recurrent feature in Greek myth: they share the same uncanniness, or wondrousness, that marks the divine, supernatural and monstrous characters who already inspire the mythic imagination.

In this chapter, I offer a brief survey of some of the more prominent myths that present images. I have not attempted to include anything like a complete listing of the relevant myths. Rather I have selected some representative examples. I have divided the kinds of images I will present into three different categories. First, I will look at natural reflections and mirror images such as those found in the myths of Perseus, Narcissus and Morpheus. Second, I will explore myths that deal with god-made objects for human use including Pandora, Achilles' shield (mentioned above) and cult statues that fall from the sky. Finally, I will examine man-made creations such as Zeuxis' painting, Daedalus' cow and Helen's tapestry.

I. NATURAL REFLECTIONS

A. PERSEUS AND THE MIRROR

Reflections act as nature's artist by providing a perfect mirror image to the viewer. Jean Pierre Vernant considers reflections to be a sort of divine art since these images are naturally occurring mimetic phenomena.[3] The Perseus and Medusa myth features prominently in Vernant's chapter about the mirror since the reflected image of Medusa "is an exact copy. It is as if the image were she, but also as though she were absent in the presence of her reflection."[4] Perseus and the Gorgons have a long-standing place among Greek myth and its tradition extends back to the fifth and sixth centuries where we find its first reference in Hesiod's *Theogony*.[5] However, Apollodorus, writing in the second century BC, provides the first literary account of the myth that includes the detail of the reflection in his work *Bibliotheca*:

> μόνη δὲ
> ἦν θνητὴ Μέδουσα· διὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τὴν ταύτης κεφαλὴν (2.40.2)
> Περσεὺς ἐπέμφθη. εἶχον δὲ αἱ Γοργόνες κεφαλὰς μὲν
> περιεσπειραμένας φολίσι δρακόντων, ὀδόντας δὲ μεγά-
> λους ὡς συῶν, καὶ χεῖρας χαλκᾶς, καὶ πτέρυγας χρυσᾶς,
> δι' ὧν ἐπέτοντο. τοὺς δὲ ἰδόντας λίθους ἐποίουν. (2.41.1)
> ἐπιστὰς οὖν αὐταῖς ὁ Περσεὺς κοιμωμέναις, κατευθυ-
> νούσης τὴν χεῖρα Ἀθηνᾶς, ἀπεστραμμένος καὶ βλέπων
> εἰς ἀσπίδα χαλκῆν, δι' ἧς τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Γοργόνος
> ἔβλεπεν, ἐκαρατόμησεν αὐτήν.[6]
>
> Now Medusa alone was mortal; for that reason Perseus was sent to fetch her head. But the Gorgons had heads twined about with the scales of dragons, and great tusks like swine's, and brazen hands, and golden wings, by which they flew; and

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[3] Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 166.
[4] Ibid, 147.
[5] Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 304-7. The first reference to the myth appears in Hesiod's *Theogony* and then again, more fleshed out, in Pherekydes. These earliest accounts of the story leave out Medusa's reflection in the shield. Instead Perseus just diverts his gaze as he cuts off her head.
[6] Although this is the first literary reference to the mirror, there are earlier vase paintings that include the reflection detail. These will be discussed in the chapter's conclusion.

> they turned to stone such as beheld them. So Perseus stood over them as they slept, and while Athena guided his hand and he looked with averted gaze on a brazen shield, in which he beheld the image of the Gorgon, he beheaded her.[7]

Of primary interest is his inclusion of the bronze shield that Perseus uses in order to mitigate his interaction with Medusa. Mythic lore dictates that anyone who looked directly into Medusa's eyes would immediately be turned to stone. Therefore, Perseus uses τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Γοργόνος, the image of the Gorgon, or the reflection seen on his shield, to see where she is without looking directly at her. In this way, he successfully beheads the monster. This reflection serves a two-fold function that helps explain the Greeks' fascination with the image. The reflection eliminates Medusa's terrifying power over Perseus because the image allows him to see Medusa clearly without directly looking at her. The reflection also directs Medusa's powerful gaze back at herself thus enabling Perseus to conquer the monster. Without the reflected image Perseus would have been turned to stone like all the others.

B. NARCISSUS

Narcissus, according to Ovidian tradition, is an extremely attractive boy who happens to catch a glimpse of his reflection while resting by a pool of water. Since, hitherto, he had never seen his own appearance, he does not realize that he is merely starring at his reflection but instead believes himself to be looking at another man. Narcissus becomes so enamoured with his own reflection that he abandons all activities necessary to survive and wastes away while starring at the image reflected before him as if another person:

> dumque sitim sedare cupit, sitis altera crevit, (Bk. 3, ll. 415)
> dumque bibit, visae correptus imagine formae
> spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est [...] (3.417)
> quid videat, nescit; sed quod videt, uritur illo, (3.430)

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[7] Sir James George Frazer, trans., *Apollodorus: The Library,* Vol.1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 157-9.

atque oculos idem, qui decipit, incitat error.
credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?
quod petis, est nusquam; quod amas, avertere, perdes!
ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est:
nil habet ista sui; tecum venitque manetque; (3.435)
tecum discedet, si tu discedere possis!
Non illum Cereris, non illum cura quietis
abstrahere inde potest, sed opaca fusus in herba
spectat inexpleto mendacem lumine formam
perque oculos perit ipse suos; (3.440)

"Thirsty for water, he started to drink, but soon grew thirsty for something else. His being was suddenly overwhelmed by a vision of beauty. He fell in love with an empty hope, a shadow mistaken for substance... He knows not what he is seeing; the sight still fires him with passion. His eyes are deceived, but the strange illusion excited his senses. Trusting fool, how futile to woo a fleeting phantom! You'll never grasp it. Turn away and your love will have vanished. The shape now haunting your sight is only a wraith, a reflection consisting of nothing; there with you when you arrived, here now, and there with you when you decide to go! Nothing could drag him away from the place, not hunger for food nor need for sleep. As he lay stretched out in the grassy shade, he could never gaze his fill on that fraudulent image of beauty; his gazing proved his demise.[8]

As this famous account in Ovid emphasizes, Narcissus' problem was precisely that he could not recognize the image of himself as a mere image. Hence, Ovid writes that Narcissus' reflection is "*corpus putat esse, quod umbra est*" ("a shadow mistaken for substance") and the "*simulacra*" ("image") is "*fugacia*" ("fleeing")."[9] The wondrousness that holds Narcissus' undivided attention, even at the point of death, embodies the ancient Greeks' fascination with the image. The power of reflection power to imitate forms that the Greeks encountered in everyday life had an uncanny quality that manifested itself in their mythic tradition.

C. ZEUS' DREAM SENT TO AGAMEMNON

[8] David Raeburn, trans., *Ovid: Metamorphoses, A New Verse Translation* (London, Penguin Books, 2004), 112-3.
[9] Ibid, 112-3.

Dreams emerge as another variation on the concept of reflection within myth. In book two of the *Iliad,* Zeus decides to send a destructive dream to Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks in order to convince him to launch his attack on the city of Troy:

> πέμψαι ἐπ' Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι οὖλον ὄνειρον· [...] (2.6)
> στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς Νηληΐῳ υἱῖ ἐοικώς (2.20)
> Νέστορι, τόν ῥα μάλιστα γερόντων τῖ' Ἀγαμέμνων·
> τῷ μιν ἐεισάμενος προσεφώνεε θεῖος ὄνειρος·
>
> "To send to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a destructive dream ...
> [the dream] stood above his head, in the likeness of the son of Neleus, Nestor, whom above all the elders Agamemnon held in honour; likening himself to him, the Dream from heaven spoke."[10]

This anecdote shows that the Greeks believed dreams to be capable of imitating reality. It also suggests that the imitative qualities of dreams offered a means through which gods could manipulate human thoughts and decisions. In this case, the dream was such a successful imitator of Nestor that it convinced Agamemnon to take the ordained course of action. This early encounter with the concept of imitative reflections sets the stage for Ovid to further elaborate on the power of dreams.

D. MORPHEUS, CEYX, AND ALCYONE

Ovid's tale of Ceÿx and Alcyone delves into the rich territory of apparitions that mimic the natural world. In this narrative Morpheus, the son of Somnus (the god of sleep) visits Alcyone so that he can reveal the death of her husband, Ceÿx. In this context, dreams deal with the world of reflections and natural phenomena insofar as they imitate the appearance of genuine forms.[11] Ovid relays that Morpheus:

> The master mimic, the quickest of all to capture a person's walk, his facial expression and tone of voice; [will] also adopt [the] original's clothing and typical

[10] A.T. Murray, trans., *Homer: Iliad,* Vol.I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 62-63.
[11] Somnia, quae veras aequent imitamine formas (*Metamorphoses* Book 11, line 625).

> language...he assumed the form and likeness of Ceÿx...[and] mimicked the voice of Ceÿx, to make Alcyone think that Ceÿx was there. Moreover, the tears he was shedding appeared to be real, and his gestures exactly resembled her husband's.[12]

This myth shows that the ancients considered dreams powerful enough to not only convince the dreamer to take a certain course of action but to persuade them that an actual event had already occurred. A dream, therefore, seems to have the same vividness and fidelity to the original as a mirror image.[13] The gods also play an essential role in these dream myths as they decide which humans receive life-like apparitions and in what manner these imitations appear to humans. The divine influence evident in these reflection myths also plays an essential role in the second category of myths, wherein god-made objects feature prominently.

II. GOD-MADE IMAGES

A. ACHILLES' SHIELD

Homer's lengthy description of Achilles' shield in book eighteen of the *Iliad* shows that art objects held an important place in the Greek literary tradition from at least the eighth century onward. This story reveals how the god Hephaistos crafts replacement armour for Achilles in such a way as to create an object that was considered wondrous by all who saw it. The extensive and intricate details placed on the shield by Hephaistos are discussed in book eighteen for one hundred thirty lines (ll. 478-608). The first lines of the description say that Hephaistos:

> Ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
> ἠέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσαν,
> ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τά τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται, (18. 485)
>
> "Fashioned the earth, on it the heavens, on it the sea,
> And the unwearied sun, and the moon at the full,

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[12] Raeburn, 453-5.

[13] Vernant, 149. He refers to the reflected image as the *eikon* and asserts that the imitated dream, an *eidolon,* is closely related.

And on it all the constellations with which heaven is crowned."[14]

Prier discusses the importance of sight to this scene and the overall function it plays throughout the epic. He claims, "a vocabulary exists that describes this experience which partakes not only of brilliant sight but also of gripping wonder *at* appearance."[15] The power that images can have on their audience becomes evident once the new armour is presented to Achilles:

> Μυρμιδόνας δ' ἄρα πάντας ἔλε τρόμος, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη (19.14)
> ἄντην εἰσιδέειν, ἀλλ' ἔτρεσαν.
>
> "Then trembling seized all the Myrmidons, and no man dared to look on it, but they shrank in fear."[16]

Achilles' shield has been classified as a "metal painting," one that depicts the storyline of the *Iliad* because it visually illustrates the prominent themes of the epic.[17] This shield, which embodies the characteristics of "*thauma idesthai*," sets the standard for the ideal work of art in Homeric Greece.[18] God-made objects for mankind seem to epitomize the idea of uncanny, where although they are wonderful to look at, they can also be frightening because they have certain aspects that defy explanation.

B. PANDORA

The mythic story surrounding the creation of Pandora shows the wondrousness and uncanniness that can occur when gods intervene in human affairs. Hesiod presents two different versions of the myth, one in his *Works and Days* and the other in his *Theogony.* Both, however, relate the same idea that the gods craft Pandora, the first woman, from clay in order to deceive

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[14] A.T. Murray, trans., *Homer: Iliad*, Vol.II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) 323.
[15] Raymond Adolph Prier, *Thauma Idesthai: The Phenomenology of Sight and Appearance in Archaic Greek* (Tallahassee, The Florida State University Press, 1989), 68. Italics in the original.
[16] Ibid, 335.
[17] Jeffery M. Hurwitt, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100-480 B.C.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 71-72.
[18] Ibid, 72.

men. Zeus has her created as a punishment for mankind since Prometheus stole fire from him. After Pandora is created she opens the infamous jar thereby releasing all of the evils into the world but trapping hope. The description of the creation of Pandora presents her as a kind of statue, deliberately fashioned and embellished by the gods to entice and deceive mortal men. Hesiod's account in the *Theogony* does not name the creation "Pandora" but it does outline that "the famous Lame God plastered up some clay / to look like a shy virgin, just like Zeus wanted /... he made this lovely evil to balance the good / then led her off to the other gods and men / ...and they were stunned, / immortal gods and mortal men, when they saw / the sheer deception, irresistible to men" (ll. 573-593).[19] Conversely, in his *Works and Days*, Hesiod describes the actual sculpting process in greater detail. Zeus called Hephaistos:

> And told him to hurry and knead some earth and water
> and put a human voice in it, and some strength,
> and to make the face like an immortal goddess' face
> And the figure like a beautiful, desirable virgin's
> ... and he named that woman
> Pandora, because all the Olympians donated something,
> and she was a real pain for human beings (ll. 79-101).[20]

This myth establishes that since the creation of the woman Greeks have been drawn to the statue, which was created to stun, intrigue and deceive mankind. This adoration of statues is supported by another type of god-made object – the cult statue.[21]

C. THE PALLADION

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[19] Stanley Lombardo, trans., *Hesiod: Works and Days and Theogony* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1993), 77.
[20] Ibid, 25-6.
[21] Additionally, there is a striking anecdote in the *Iliad* (24.602-614) and in the *Metamorphoses* (6.303-9) where the inverse of this creation happens. The gods change Niobe from a living being into a rock since her grief is too great to bear. The gods make this opposite transformation after all of Niobe's children are killed when she infuriates the gods with a gratuitous boast. This interesting comparison reveals the gods' tendency to make transformations both to and from stone. Pausanias later writes that he found the rock of Niobe on Mount Sipylus and that from a distance it appears to be a woman who is crying, hunched over in grief (*Description of Greece* 1.21.3).

The statue of Athena, also referred to as the Palladion, was a cult object sent down from heaven. The stories about the Palladion are many and quite varied, but the most commonly recounted story is this: Zeus sent down a small wooden statue from heaven to Ilium, the city of Troy, where the people worshipped it and held it in the highest regard. They came to believe that as long as the Palladion remained in Troy that the city could not fall to the Greeks during the Trojan War. However, Ulysses and Diomedes, two Greek soldiers, steal into the city under the cover of night and capture the statue so that they can take it back to the Greek ships, thus guaranteeing the fall of Troy. Apollodorus describes the statue falling from heaven during Ilus' prayers at the founding of the city:

> τῷ δὲ Διὶ
> σημεῖον εὐξάμενος αὐτῷ τι φανῆναι, μεθ' ἡμέραν τὸ (3.143.5)
> διιπετὲς παλλάδιον πρὸ τῆς σκηνῆς κείμενον ἐθεάσατο.
>
> "And having prayed to Zeus that a sign might be shown to him, he beheld by day the Palladium, fallen from heaven, lying before his tent."[22]

He later describes the theft of the statue, which enables the sack of the Trojan city by the Greeks, "if the Palladium, which had fallen from heaven, were stolen from Troy, for while it was within the walls the city could not be taken… [but] Ulysses went with Diomedes by night to the city, and…stole away the Palladium."[23] Statues created by the gods and given to mankind are objects that possess the ability to protect and defend the people who worshipped them, which explains why a simple wooden statue would be so greatly venerated by an entire city. The transition from god-made objects to man-made objects rests on the idea that statues and beautifully decorated shields provided a visual example for humans. The gods gave gifts to men,

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[22] Sir James George Frazer, trans., *Apollodorus: The Library*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 39.
[23] Ibid, 225-7.

some positive and some treacherous, but they served as models for the types of artistic productions that were possible.

III. HUMAN PRODUCTIONS

A. DAEDALUS' COW

Daedalus was one of the most renowned artists of ancient Greece. For the purposes of this paper we will focus on the mythic story where he creates a wooden cow for Queen Pasiphae. Bacchylides offers a fifth-century reference, in Ode 26, to Pasiphae's request of Daedalus to create an object through which she could mate with the bull.[24] However, Apollodorus once again provides the most detailed account of the story. Poseidon becomes angry with Minos, the king of Crete and Pasiphae's husband. Minos does not sacrifice the beautiful bull that Poseidon sends up to him but instead chooses a less desirable one from his herd to send to sacrifice. Angered by this disrespectful gesture, Poseidon makes Pasiphae fall in love with the bull as retribution for Minos' greed. Apollodorus writes that Pasiphae:

> ἡ δὲ ἐρασθεῖσα (3.9.5)
> τοῦ ταύρου συνεργὸν λαμβάνει Δαίδαλον, ὃς ἦν ἀρχι-
> τέκτων, [...] οὗτος ξυλί- (3.10.1)
> νην βοῦν ἐπὶ τροχῶν κατασκευάσας, καὶ ταύτην βαλὼν
> κοιλάνας ἔνδοθεν, ἐκδείρας τε βοῦν τὴν δορὰν περι-
> έρραψε, καὶ θεὶς ἐν ᾧπερ εἴθιστο ὁ ταῦρος λειμῶνι
> βόσκεσθαι, τὴν Πασιφάην ἐνεβίβασεν. (3.10.5)
>
> "in her love for the bull she found an accomplice in Daedalus, an architect... [who] constructed a wooden cow on wheels, took it, hollowed it out in the inside, sewed it up in the hide of a cow which he had skinned, and set it in the meadow in which the bull used to graze. Then he introduced Pasiphae into it."[25]

Later, Clement of Alexandria explicitly sets out the ability of Daedalus' skill to deceive the bull into mating with the constructed version of the cow. Apollodorus' version only implies this

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[24] Gantz, 260.
[25] Frazer Vol.1, 305.

detail by the fact that Pasiphae bears a child, the Minotaur, after having relations with the bull. Clement, however, writes:

> ἡ δὲ βοῦς ἡ Δαιδάλου ἡ ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου πεποιημένη ταῦρον εἶλεν ἄγριον καὶ κατηνάγκασεν τὸ θηρίον ἡ τέχνη πλανήσασα ἐρώσης ἐπιβῆναι γυναικός. (4.57.6.4)
>
> "Yet the cow of Daedalus, made of wood, infatuated a wild bull; and the beast, led astray by the art, was constrained to approach a love-sick woman."[26]

Ovid echoes similar sentiments in his rendition of the myth in his *Metamorphoses*. Pasiphae, although not directly identified by name, is mentioned as Minos' "adulterous queen who cheated the fierce-eyed bull with a cow of wood and the fruit of her womb was a hybrid monster."[27]

This myth takes us two steps closer to understanding the ancient Greeks' conception of art. It reveals that art could mimic nature in such a way as to deceive or fool animals, a concept that will be emphasized later by Zeuxis' myth. It also shows us that the ancient Greeks expected mankind to interact with art objects, not merely observe them. In the Daedalus myth the purpose was to create a wooden cow that would allow Pasiphae to satiate her love with the bull. With the Palladion and other cult statues the goal was to worship the Olympian gods through the artistic representation displayed within the temple. As the three remaining myths will reinforce, the wondrousness of art objects induced a physical reaction amongst their viewers regardless of whether the viewer was human or animal.

B. ZEUXIS' PAINTING

Zeuxis, a renowned painter of the Hellenistic era, was recorded by Pliny the Elder to have entered into a competition with another painter by the name of Parrhasius.[28] This story conveys

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[26] G.W. Butterworth, trans., *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 133.
[27] Raeburn, 300.

a similar fixation on the image that, previously only seen with statues or other three-dimensional objects, now extends to the medium of painting. According to the tale, Zeuxis painted a still-life scene that included grapes, which were so realistic as to incite birds to approach the painting and peck at the fruit. Zeuxis, thinking he had won the competition, asked Parrhasius to draw back the curtain covering his painting so that they could compare the two illustrations. Parrhasius, however, had painted the curtain so realistically in order to fool Zeuxis, whereupon Zeuxis admitted defeat since he had only succeeded in fooling birds, yet Parrhasius had fooled a fellow artist. Even though Zeuxis seems to be motivated by a more purely aesthetic purpose than we have encountered in the other myths, the important fact, for the purposes of this chapter, is that images still excite the mythic imagination and feature prominently in the stories.

C. HELEN'S TAPESTRY

Book three of the *Iliad* discusses man-made art objects in addition to the god-made objects considered earlier. In this instance the goddess Iris is sent as a messenger to Helen in order to make her long for Menelaus, her first husband, and feel shame for having incited the Trojan war:

> τὴν δ' εὗρ' ἐν μεγάρῳ· ἡ δὲ μέγαν ἱστὸν ὕφαινε, (3.125)
> δίπλακα πορφυρέην, πολέας δ' ἐνέπασσεν ἀέθλους
> Τρώων θ' ἱπποδάμων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων,
> οὕς ἑθεν εἵνεκ' ἔπασχον ὑπ' Ἄρηος παλαμάων·
>
> "She found Helen in the hall, where she was weaving a great purple web of double fold on which she was embroidering many battles of the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-clad Achaean, which for her sake they had endured at the hands of Ares."[29]

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[28] H. Rackham, trans., *Pliny: Natural History*, Vol. IX (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 309

[29] Murray Vol.I, 137-9.

The tapestry depicts a scene applicable to the lives of the characters. Achilles' shield included landscape and battle scenes just as Helen's tapestry visually depicts the events occurring around her. Again, this literary mention of artistic creation establishes a pattern in Greek society where art objects held a notable position within society.

D. ARACHNE'S TAPESTRY

Ovid's myth about Arachne and Athena provides another instance where images woven into tapestries become important. Arachne challenges the goddess to a weaving contest thinking she can best the immortal. Ovid speaks at length regarding the two tapestries produced by Arachne and Athena. Ultimately, Athena wins the competition but jealous of Arachne's skill and as punishment for the girl's insolence Athena changes her into a spider so that forevermore she will be forced to hang from woven threads. Ovid's myth includes the following details regarding both Arachne's skill as an artist and the tapestry that she spins:

> Maeoniaeque animum fatis intendit Arachnes, (5)
> quam sibi lanificae non cedere *laudibus artis*
> audierat [...]
> huius ut adspicerent opus admirabile, saepe (14)
> deseruere sui nymphae vineta Timoli,
> deseruere suas nymphae Pactolides undas.
> nec factas solum vestes, spectare iuvabat
> tum quoque, cum fierent: tantus decor adfuit *arti,* [...]
> Maeonis elusam designat *imagine* tauri (103)
> Europam: verum taurum, *freta vera putares*;
>
> "Arachne's distinction lay not in her birth or the place that she hailed from but solely her art. [...] The nymphs used often to leave their haunts, Mount Tmolus' vines or the banks of the river Pactolus, to gaze on Arachne's amazing artistry, equally eager to watch her handwork in progress (her skill was so graceful) as much as to look at the finished article [...] Arachne's picture presented Europa seduced by Jove in the guise of a bull; the bull and the sea were convincingly real."[30]

[30] Raeburn, 210-215.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE MYTHIC TRADITION OF THE IMAGE

As evidenced by this brief catalogue of ancient myths it becomes clear that the ancient Greeks had a fascination with art objects on account of their wondrous and uncanny qualities. This interest, in both the artist and the images they created, manifests itself in the literary traditions of the ancient Greeks. Greek myth addresses multiple variations of the natural phenomena of reflections: Perseus and Medusa deals with the idea of reflection in a pseudo-mirror (a bronze shield), whereas Narcissus reveals the dangerous qualities of reflections in water. Previously in the catalogue of myths Apollodorus was cited as the earliest literary reference that recorded the reflection detail for the Perseus and Medusa myth but it is important to note at this point that there are earlier visual references to the reflection. Vase paintings [Figures 1, 2 and 3] exist that are dated to 400-375 BC making them significantly earlier than the Apollodorus passage. This is worthwhile to note because the mirror-story therefore is not a later embellishment by Apollodorus on a plainer myth, but actually an essential detail of the mythic tradition as early as the fourth century BC.[31] Therefore the natural images that reflections create hold an important place early on in the mythic tradition. Vernant concludes that this natural image, "the *eikon*, the image-reflection of Medusa, is also close to the *eidolon* or the double (the image of a dream sent by the gods, a spectre of the dead or the appearance of a phantom)."[32] The bronze shield and the pond, in the case of Narcissus, present perfect reflections to the viewer just as dreams have the power to present perfect imitations or convincingly reflections of reality to the dreamer. This power inherent to natural images is also present in art objects made by the divinities.

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[31] *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC)* (Zürich: Artemis, 1981), Vol.7, Pt. 1, Pg. 336-7.
[32] Vernant, 149.

However, the power of the image does not necessarily consist in its uncanny similarity to the original. Pandora seems to be a stylized statue; the planks that represented goddesses were not illusionistic, but no less impressive on that account. A vase painting of the Pandora myth [Fig.4] shows the statue before it had been turned into a real woman and offers an interesting point for cult-statues. This vase painting shows Pandora as a woman but not completely faithful to the human form. Objects like cult-statues therefore may not attempt to be mirror-like at all. The Nikandre Statue serves as an indication of the possible plank-like appearance of cult statues, like the Palladion [Fig.5]. The literary references establish that these early cult statues were supernatural and powerful, but the visual evidence shows that they maintained this power without being representational—they were slabs with some human features crudely incised. Therefore according to the early mythic tradition it seems that an art object can be divine and wondrous, but not necessarily illusionistic. In this way they illuminate one aspect of the image such that they make the represented object more vividly present to the viewer.

The man-made objects highlight another aspect of the image—that it is produced by human skill. In fact, Ovid emphasizes that Arachne owed her renown not to her heritage, but purely to her phenomenal skill. Thus, a curious feature of the image is that it exhibits an unearthly elusiveness, but at the same time is the result of human creation. The curiosities that create this uncanniness about the image also elicit concern. Plato, alarmed by the wondrousness of art objects and the reactions it incites in viewers, explores whether images have a valid function in his ideal city.

CHAPTER TWO
THE IMAGE IN PHILOSOPHY: PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE IMAGE

As chapter one shows us, the image intrigued, excited and motivated the mythic imagination. This fascination with the image also manifested itself in Greek philosophy and the concept of mimetic art features notably in the philosophy of Plato's *Republic*. Plato took a philosophical interest in the visual image as such, and in the *Republic* he presents the city-formation as analogous, in many ways, to painting. This seems to establish at the very least a neutral, if not somewhat positive, role for mimetic art within the ideal city. However, Plato's comments regarding imitative art change considerably in Book X. There, Socrates sets forth the infamous mirror analogy that seems to strip the mimetic arts of any value. The comments in Book X have been used to establish a Platonic philosophy of mimetic art – one that is rather reductive in nature. The first important detail to note about Plato's comments concerning art are that they do not remain consistent throughout the *Republic*, let alone the entire corpus of his work. Thus the goal of this inquiry is not to create one cohesive philosophy about art. However, by devoting more attention to Plato's references about mimetic art in the earlier books of the *Republic* and combining these insights with Stephen Halliwell's analysis of the mirror analogy, we can show that Plato does not utterly condemn the mimetic arts and in fact leaves room for them within his ideal city.

In Book VI we find Plato's most consistently positive references to both the artist and mimetic art. Here, Socrates has recalled the distinction he has just drawn between the true lover of wisdom and the lovers of spectacles, who deny the existence of a singular Beauty. He then continues by asking:

> Ἦ οὖν δοκοῦσί τι τυφλῶν διαφέρειν οἱ τῷ ὄντι τοῦ ὄντος ἑκάστου ἐστερημένοι τῆς γνώσεως, καὶ μηδὲν ἐναργὲς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχοντες **παράδειγμα**, μηδὲ δυνάμενοι ὥσπερ γραφῆς

> εἰς τὸ ἀληθέστατον ἀποβλέποντες κἀκεῖσε ἀεὶ ἀναφέροντές τε
> καὶ θεώμενοι ὡς οἷόν τε ἀκριβέστατα, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε (6.484d 1)
> νόμμα καλῶν τε πέρι καὶ δικαίων καὶ ἀγαθῶν τίθεσθαί
>
> Can you see any difference between those who are blind and those who are genuinely lacking in knowledge of everything that is? They have no clear pattern or **model** in their soul. They can't look at the reality the way painters do, making constant comparisons with it and observing it as closely as possible, and in this way establish rules about beauty, justice and goodness in everyday life.[33]

Plato seems to indicate a fairly positive role for mimetic arts within the city by making a few important distinctions. Painters have a clear model (παραδειγμα) that they are able to consult, which allows them to look accurately at reality. Similarly, he says that philosophers have a "'vividly clear *paradeigma* in their mind' to which they can constantly 'look' and refer."[34] Plato says that a painter consults a model when painting a picture; and, analogously, the philosopher looks at his model, and constantly consults it when establishing rules for the city. This idea of having a clear or ideal pattern in one's mind, specifically the term *paradeigma,* gets repeated just a few lines later where Plato continues his discussion about the philosopher. Plato's ideal leader for his city is the philosopher-ruler, which becomes significant because he compares the job of the philosopher to the abilities of an artist:

> Θείῳ δὴ καὶ κοσμίῳ ὅ γε φιλόσοφος ὁμιλῶν κόσμός τε
> καὶ θεῖος εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γίγνεται· [...] (6.500d 1)
> Ἂν οὖν τις, εἶπον, αὐτῷ ἀνάγκη γένηται ἃ ἐκεῖ ὁρᾷ
> μελετῆσαι εἰς ἀνθρώπων ἤθη καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ τιθέναι (6.500d 5)
> καὶ μὴ μόνον ἑαυτὸν πλάττειν, ἆρα κακὸν δημιουργὸν αὐτὸν
> οἴει γενήσεσθαι σωφροσύνης τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ συμ-
> πάσης τῆς δημοτικῆς ἀρετῆς;
> Ἥκιστά γε, ἦ δ' ὅς.
> Ἀλλ' ἐὰν δὴ αἴσθωνται οἱ πολλοὶ ὅτι ἀληθῆ περὶ αὐτοῦ
> λέγομεν, χαλεπανοῦσι δὴ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις καὶ ἀπιστήσουσιν (6.500e 1)
> ἡμῖν λέγουσιν ὡς οὐκ ἄν ποτε ἄλλως εὐδαιμονήσειε πόλις,

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[33] Tom Griffith, trans., *Plato: The Republic*, ed. G.R.F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 186. Translation of the Greek passages comes from this source. I have added the italics in these passages in order to help emphasize key words or phrases.

[34] Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 129. Halliwell also points to the significance of the term *paradeigma* and how it relates to these passages of the *Republic*.

> εἰ μὴ αὐτὴν διαγράψειαν οἱ τῷ θείῳ **παραδείγματι** χρώμενοι *ζωγράφοι*;
>
> "So the philosopher, spending his time with what is divine and ordered, in fact becomes as ordered and divine as it is possible for a human being to be … and if there were some compulsion on him to put what he sees there into effect in human behaviour, both in private and public, instead of simply moulding his own personality, do you think there will be anything wrong with him as the craftsman of the self-discipline, justice and general excellence we need in the ordinary population?"
> "Certainly not."
> "And if they realize what we are saying about the philosopher is true, will they be hostile to him? Will they refuse to believe us when we say there is no way the city can ever be happy until it is designed by *artists* using this divine **pattern**?"[35]

The ability of the philosopher to see the ideal *paradeigma* and then create a working model from this ideal is what Plato uses to set the philosopher-ruler apart from the typical political leader. Plato's philosopher-ruler is capable of seeing and knowing the ideal forms and in that capacity he is the most suitable person to craft the city by educating its citizens. In Book VII, 540a, Plato writes a description of the "climax of philosophical training as the moment when the mind's eye can be opened to the light of the good itself, which the philosopher-rulers will then take as their perpetual ideal model (*paradeigma*)."[36] This discussion of a model echoes the first passage where Plato attributes a similar ability to artists. This passage sets forth quite a positive reception of artists and their skills since philosophers are supposed to imitate the divine and ordered cosmos for the ordinary population. Plato establishes an important corollary to this discussion earlier in Book V where he explores the theoretical versus practical applications of this theory. Socrates' audience objects that his ideal city can never become a reality.

> Οἴει ἂν οὖν ἧττόν τι ἀγαθὸν ζωγράφον εἶναι ὃς ἂν γράψας **παράδειγμα** οἷον ἂν εἴη ὁ κάλλιστος ἄνθρωπος καὶ πάντα εἰς τὸ γράμμα ἱκανῶς ἀποδοὺς μὴ ἔχῃ ἀποδεῖξαι ὡς καὶ δυνατὸν γενέσθαι τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα;
> Μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγ', ἔφη. (5.472d 5)

[35] Griffith, 205.
[36] Halliwell, 130.

Τί οὖν; οὐ καὶ ἡμεῖς, φαμέν, **παράδειγμα** ἐποιοῦμεν
λόγῳ ἀγαθῆς πόλεως; (5.472e 1)
Πάνυ γε.

"Suppose a painter paints a picture which is a **model** of the outstandingly beautiful man. Suppose he renders every detail of his painting perfectly, but is unable to show that it is possible for such a man to exist. Do you think that makes him any worse a painter?"
"Good heavens, no."
"Then what about us? Aren't we in the same position? Can't we claim to have been constructing a theoretical **model** of a good city?"
"We certainly can."[37]

Socrates answers that a model city need not be realizable, anymore than the beauty of a painted figure must be possible in actual life. Artists strive to accurately paint the objects they observe just as philosophers see the ideal forms of ordered government and are supposed to imitate them in their institutions. As seen in these passages, Plato references art many times and seems to establish that it possesses positive qualities from which the rest of the city could benefit.

Plato even uses the mechanical process of painting a picture to illuminate the philosophical method:

Καὶ τὸ μὲν ἂν οἶμαι ἐξαλείφοιεν, τὸ δὲ πάλιν ἐγγράφοιεν,
ἕως ὅτι μάλιστα ἀνθρώπεια ἤθη εἰς ὅσον ἐνδέχεται θεοφιλῆ (6.501c)
ποιήσειαν.
Καλλίστη γοῦν ἄν, ἔφη, ἡ γραφὴ γένοιτο.

"I suppose they'd rub one bit out, and draw another bit to replace it, doing all they could to make human characters as pleasing to god as human characters can be."
"It would certainly be a very beautiful picture."[38]

It is important to have an understanding of how Plato presents the artist and imitation in the earlier books of the *Republic* since these previously neutral, perhaps even positive, references to the mimetic artist change dramatically in the last book. As Stephen Halliwell writes "the cumulative force of these analogies seems to converge on the thought that philosophers are painters in another medium, in the sense that they endeavour to give vivid realization or

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[37]Griffith, 174.
[38] Ibid, 206.

embodiment to ideals conceived in and held before their minds."[39] Therefore, Plato's repeated references to painting and the process of painting in order to illuminate the work of the philosopher-ruler shows that Plato's ideas about art were not altogether negative.

Plato's theory of art, however, becomes contentious in Book X (595a-608a) when he breaks from his pattern of favorable references to art and the artist and opens this final book with a perplexing mirror analogy that complicates his previous remarks regarding mimetic art:

> Οὐ χαλεπός, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ἀλλὰ πολλαχῇ καὶ ταχὺ δημουρ-
> γούμενος, τάχιστα δέ που, εἰ 'θέλεις λαβὼν κάτοπτρον
> περιφέρειν πανταχῇ· ταχὺ μὲν ἥλιον ποιήσεις καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ (10.596e)
> οὐρανῷ, ταχὺ δὲ γῆν, ταχὺ δὲ σαυτόν τε καὶ τἆλλα ζῷα καὶ
> σκεύη καὶ φυτὰ καὶ πάντα ὅσα νυνδὴ ἐλέγετο.
> Ναί, ἔφη, φαινόμενα, οὐ μέντοι ὄντα γέ που τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.
>
> "There's nothing difficult about it," I said. "This kind of workmanship is often – and easily – practiced. I suppose the quickest way is if you care to take a mirror and carry it around with you wherever you go. That way you'll soon create the sun and the heavenly bodies, soon create the earth, soon create yourself, other living creatures, furniture, plants, and all the things we've just been talking about.'"
> "Yes," he said. "I could create them as they appear to be. But not, I take it, as they truly are."[40]

Here, instead of a positive reference to art and the role imitation could play in forming the city, we find an unexpected and rather harsh criticism of art. Plato compares the mimetic arts to pure, unqualified reflection and in doing so presents a severely limited conception of imitation. The mirror analogy suggests that an artist does not have any knowledge of the object that he portrays since any reflective surface can create an accurate representation. And although Plato's reference to the painter and art are intended mainly as an illustration for the attack on mimetic poetry, he offers an intriguing analysis of art in its own right.

Many scholars conclude that with this mirror analogy Plato eliminates any possibility for

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[39] Halliwell, 130.
[40] Griffith, 315.

art to convey an ethical knowledge to its audience and therefore it must be excluded from the ideal city. Daryl Rice offers a succinct summarization of one very common way of understanding Plato's ideas about art in Book X:

> Art imitates ordinary objects, which only imperfectly imitate the lesser forms, which, in turn, derive their being from the form of the good. ... A painting of a bed, [Socrates] notes, is always from some particular and therefore partial perspective. And, indeed, a painting of anything is either an end view or a top view or a corner view; no painting can capture a thing as it would appear at once from all perspectives (598a-598c).[41]

The analogy between painting and the mirror-image eliminates any interpretive or creative abilities on the part of the artist and limits imitation to pure reflection. With this reading of Book X, Plato's analogy to a mirror expresses the idea that art does not require any specific knowledge or skill; a painting reveals nothing that could not be learned by inspecting the thing itself.[42] Nancy Demand articulates the key question for discussing Book X of Plato's *Republic*. She inquires, "how are we to explain the fact that Plato, who had formerly co-existed peacefully with the illusionists, suddenly turned upon them with such vehemence?"[43] Demand claims that Plato's attack on art in Republic 10 is aimed primarily at the illusionistic art that had come to be in favour during Plato's own time. This kind of painting was called "skiagraphic" (shadow

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[41] Daryl H. Rice, *A Guide to Plato's Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 115.

[42] There has been much discussion among scholars as to whether the mirror analogy in Book X requires an understanding of metaphysical forms. Halliwell maintains, however, that "provided we can give *some* sense to the notion of a domain of truth and reality that goes beyond that of material or sensible particulars. If we call this domain the domain of philosophical truth, then one aspect of Socrates' analysis will be the double suggestion that such truth cannot be captured by an account of the material world alone, and that representational art, because embedded in an experience of the world as empirical phenomenon, inevitably distances us from the search for philosophical truth" (137, Italics in the original). This is the ultimate difference between the philosopher-rulers and artists, where one strives to understand only the higher domain of philosophical truth and the other's task remains rooted in the physical and earthly realm. However, the purpose of those early references in Book VI were to establish a pattern of positive remarks about mimetic art and despite the metaphysical differences between forms I think the artist has still been portrayed in a positive manner.

[43] Nancy Demand, "Plato and the Painters," *Phoenix* 29 (1975): 18.

painting) and was a technique developed by Sicyonian artists that came to prominence in ancient Greece during Plato's lifetime. According to Demand this artistic development acts as the catalyst for Plato's attack on art.[44] She focuses on the shift in Plato's position on painting throughout the *Republic* and writes that it centers around the distinction of true/good painting such that "in Book 10 it is the painter's very success in achieving his ends which condemns him: it is the *good* (capable) painter who is able to deceive" because he can accurately and realistically imitate nature.[45]

Her conclusion, that the extreme illusionist techniques of painters are what motivated Plato's negative passages about imitative art, is not persuasive. She maintains that external influences, the artistic practices of the time, influenced Plato's negative views of art, but she does not discuss why these same developments did not affect the more favourable views established in earlier portions of the dialogue. Additionally, and more important, nowhere in the *Republic* does Plato draw any distinction between different kinds of art – illusionistic or otherwise. Therefore, Demand's argument rests on a distinction that Plato never articulates.

Interestingly, the mythic tradition did not seem to draw important distinctions between illusionistic art and simpler renderings either. The cult statues remained sacred even though they did not portray the human form faithfully. Reflections produced by mirrors – as in the myth of Narcissus, for example – are dangerous and uncanny. Mythically, whether or not the image is illusionistic, it remains an uncanny and "wondrous" phenomenon. Plato's ambivalence about the image may likewise be traced to its uncanniness, the fact that it is neither one thing nor the other. Plato's interest in the uncanny similarity between the image and the original is not only abundant in his philosophy, but was also fruitful in myth. A reflected image can be dangerous for its

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[44] Demand, 20.
[45] Ibid, 10. Italics in the original.

viewers and in tends to provide nothing beneficial or helpful. His main concern is that imitation allows poets, artists, and ultimately tragedians to deceive their viewers/audiences into believing that something is actually true instead of realizing that it is only an interpretation of reality. His apparently absolute condemnation of painting in *Republic* X should be qualified when read in the context of the earlier books of the *Republic*.

Halliwell opposes the commonly supported theory that Plato's mirror analogy suggests a reductive theory towards the mimetic arts by contextualizing it within the earlier references to art in the *Republic*. He maintains that Plato's comments should actually be interpreted as a challenge issued to painters rather than a complete denunciation of all visual arts. According to Halliwell, when Plato employs the analogy of a mirror, he warns artists of the risks that come with realistic copying. Pure reflection requires no selection or choice on the artist's behalf and thus offers nothing new or substantive to the viewer. Halliwell's reasoning establishes that "the mirror analogy stands for the threat...paintings are in danger of being as cognitively superfluous as mirror images" and it is this danger that motivates Plato's concerns about ethical knowledge and mimetic art's ability to properly educate citizens.[46]

Halliwell maintains that Plato's mirror analogy is simply his acknowledgement that art has the possibility of becoming unimaginative mimesis and serves as a warning that in those cases it offers nothing more then a mere reflection. But just as the philosopher-king selects which aspects of the ideal *paradeigma* to imitate when forming the city and molding the citizens, the artist must choose which aspects of the beautiful to include in his paintings. Mimetic art, Halliwell writes, "insists both on the selective, interpretative character of the artwork and on the active, interpretative response of the collaborative viewer."[47] This new definition of imitation

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[46] Halliwell, 139.
[47] Ibid, 143.

allows for the possibility that art can indeed be a creative and visionary enterprise in which the painted image can positively influence and instruct the viewer. The mirror shows "pure" and "unqualified realism" without any "discrimination;" whereas painting requires the creative ability to select which aspects of an object should be used to best convey an understanding of the object as a whole.[48]

Halliwell maintains the mirror analogy is doubly unfortunate because it obscures the interpretive capabilities of both the artist and the viewer. Socrates is forced to limit imitation to mere reflection in Book X so that he can denounce tragedy. The mirror analogy takes away the human intentionality inherent to mimetic art and allows Socrates to question what benefit reflected images have for the citizens. However, when read in the context of the *Republic* as a whole, his concerns about imitation seem much less damning to the position of art within the city. Halliwell's conclusion depends on an understanding of the function of art throughout the entire *Republic* since he maintains that Plato's comments in Book X do not cancel the earlier positive references to art. Just as the earlier books speak to the benefits and natural inclination to imitate ideal forms, Book X speaks to the dangers inherent in imitation if artists and perhaps even philosophers do not heed this warning.

Halliwell argues that imitative art provides more than just a reflection of nature and that Plato's mirror analogy should not be considered a definitive ruling on the status of art within the city. He maintains that the key task is "to find a justification for pictorial representation that will endow it with something other than the cognitively redundant value of merely counterfeiting the "look" of the real."[49] The basis for allowing imitative art to remain in the ideal city is to show that it embodies a type of ethical knowledge, which is based on the artist's ability to select and

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[48] Halliwell, 144-5.
[49] Ibid, 139.

creatively combine different characteristics in order to paint a morally relevant painting. Halliwell harkens back to Book III, 401 where Plato writes that "painting is 'full' of formal manifestations of 'character' (*ethos*), and he speaks of mimesis in a way that should be construed, in part at least, as a concept of expression...saying that beautiful form (*euschemosyne*) involves *mimemata* of good character."[50] In this passage Plato outlines how all things contain both a good and bad nature but that imitation should only encourage the good nature of the soul, especially during the education of the philosopher-rulers. Therefore "beauty of form is a matter not just of appearances but of appearances that embody and convey ethical value...form is not neutrally depictional but communicative of feeling and value."[51] In Book III, 401c-d Plato writes:

> ἀλλ' ἐκείνους ζητητέον τοὺς δημιουργοὺς τοὺς εὐφυῶς δυνα-
> μένους ἰχνεύειν τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ εὐσχήμονος φύσιν, (3.401.c 5)
> ἵνα ὥσπερ ἐν ὑγιεινῷ τόπῳ οἰκοῦντες οἱ νέοι ἀπὸ παντὸς
> ὠφελῶνται, ὁπόθεν ἂν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν καλῶν ἔργων ἢ πρὸς
> ὄψιν ἢ πρὸς ἀκοήν τι προσβάλῃ, ὥσπερ αὔρα φέρουσα ἀπὸ
> χρηστῶν τόπων ὑγίειαν, καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ παίδων λανθάνῃ εἰς (3.401.d 1)
> ὁμοιότητά τε καὶ φιλίαν καὶ συμφωνίαν τῷ καλῷ λόγῳ
> ἄγουσα;
>
> We must seek out the craftsman with a gift for tracking down the nature of what is fine, what has grace, so that our young can live in a healthy environment, drawing improvement from every side, whenever things which are beautifully fashioned expose their eyes or ears to some wholesome breeze from healthy regions and lead them imperceptibly, from earliest childhood, into affinity, friendship and harmony with beauty of speech and thought.[52]

This passage seems to confirm Halliwell's thesis that Plato offered a warning, not a denunciation for mimetic artists. In order to remain in his ideal city they must provide a beneficial purpose and convey an ethical knowledge for the audience not a mere reflection of nature. Although Plato seems to reference and ambiguously discuss all mimetic arts in this passage, he specifically

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[50] Halliwell, 132.
[51] Ibid, 132.
[52] Griffith, 92.

includes visual imitation when he writes, "whenever things which are beautifully fashioned expose their eyes." Halliwell concludes that:

> In Republic 3 is it a matter of the form of the mimetic artwork as a whole (including that of individual figures) serving as a medium for affective and ethical attitudes. ... Mimesis is taken to be inescapably engaged in making moral sense of the human world – not just registering appearances, but actively construing, interpreting, and judging them. ... Mimetic beauty, for Plato, is an expressive form of ethical value.[53]

This means that at some level there is an inherent truthfulness and knowledge in imitation and therefore the mimetic arts do not need to be definitively excluded from the city. Artists and citizens, though, do need to be cognizant of the deceptive qualities of mimesis and the fact that pure reflection yields no benefits to its audience. Ultimately, Halliwell maintains that Plato allows for the mimetic arts to contain some ethical knowledge, which thereby allows them to be included in the ideal city. Artists just need to prove that they will tackle this challenge and not become a superfluous entity like the reflection of a mirror.

Therefore it seems that the analogies between the philosopher-king and the artist provide a more accurate and useful understanding of the artists' position within the ideal city than the infamous mirror analogy. In this sense, just as the philosopher is not limited to the constraints of reality in his conception of the ideal, the painter is not confined to the reality of things but paints an ideal image of things as they truly are. These philosophical tenets seem to influence Ovid when he crafts his mythic stories. Acting from a negative stimulus, Pygmalion, an artist refers to the ideal *paradeigma* and sculpts a beautiful woman. Pygmalion does not create a particular woman, pieced together from different aspects of mortal beauty, but an idealized woman – one with whom he falls in love.

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[53] Halliwell, 132.

CHAPTER THREE
PYGMALION AS A CASE STUDY

Ovid's Pygmalion myth, found in his *Metamorphoses,* shows a clear influence from the Greek mythic tradition as well as Plato's philosophy on mimetic art. The additions that Ovid makes to his tale about Pygmalion compel further examination because they forever change the future trajectory and perception of the image. Ovid's Pygmalion myth is the story of a sculptor whose creation miraculously turns into a living woman and thus continues the mythic tradition of uncanny images that are (*thauma idesthai*) "a wonder to behold." Plato's discussion of beauty and the importance that he places on the abilities of the philosopher-king and the artist to refer to an ideal model seems to impact Ovid's construction of myth. In Ovid's story Pygmalion desires to sculpt his vision of the ideal woman – one not based on the corruption he finds around him. A selection from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* further articulates Pygmalion's motivation to sculpt the ideal woman:

> 'Quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis (243)
> viderat, offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti
> femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs
> vivebat thalamique diu consorte carebat.
> interea niveum mira feliciter arte
> sculpsit ebur formamque dedit, qua femina nasci
> nulla potest, operisque sui concepit amorem.
> virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,
> et, si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri:
> ars adeo latet arte sua. miratur et haurit
> pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes.
> saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit
> corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur.
> oscula dat reddique putat loquiturque tenetque
> et credit tactis digitos insidere membris
> et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus,
> et modo blanditias adhibet, (259)
>
> These women's scandalous way of life was observed by a sculptor, Pygmalion. Sick of the vices with which the female sex has been so richly endowed, he chose for a number of years to remain unmarried, without a partner to share his bed. In

> the course of time he successfully carved an amazingly skilful statue in ivory, white as snow, an image of perfect feminine beauty – and fell in love with his own creation. This heavenly woman appeared to be real; you'd surely suppose her alive and ready to move, if modesty didn't preclude it; art was concealed by art to a rare degree. Pygmalion's marvelling soul was inflamed with desire for a semblance of body. Again and again his hands moved over his work to explore it. Flesh or ivory? No, it couldn't be ivory now! He kissed it and thought it was kissing him too. He talked to it, held it, imagined his fingers sinking into the limbs he was touching, frightened of bruising those pure white arms as he gripped them tight.[54]

The tale continues in this manner with Pygmalion dressing the statue, adorning her with jewels and lying with her in bed. Pygmalion makes an offering to Venus during the festival held in her honour and beseeches her "'you gods, all gifts, are within your power. Grant me to wed…' – not daring to say 'my ivory maiden,' he used the words 'a woman resembling my ivory maiden.' She understood what Pygmalion meant" so that when he goes home and once again embraces the statue she transforms it into a real woman.[55] He creates a representation of ideal beauty that is transformed into a living, breathing woman and therefore she becomes more then just an ideal reflection of beauty. By comparing this telling of the myth to the ancient Greek myths it will show what traditions Ovid remained true to and thus what elements he changed. In analyzing these Greek myths will we find that there is a rich history of men becoming infatuated with statues and trying to have intimate relations with them.

ORIGINS OF THE PYGMALION MYTH

Greek tradition revolves around the worship of statues versus the creation of, infatuation with and then transformation of a statue. Ovid's Greek predecessors focused on the desire of men who tried to have sexual relations with the statues; whereas, both the creation and

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[54] Raeburn, 394.
[55] Ibid, 394-6.

transformation of the statue play a significant role in Ovid's myth. Joseph Solodow writes that a "comparison of this version with its Greek source shows, in making it over, [Ovid] gave it a new subject and reconceived it so powerfully that it became a paradigm for later ages."[56] A comparison to the Greek sources highlights the important similarities and differences between the two mythic traditions. Clement of Alexandria, in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, writes:

> Οὕτως ὁ Κύπριος ὁ Πυγμαλίων ἐκεῖνος ἐλεφαντίνου ἠράσθη ἀγάλματος· τὸ ἄγαλμα Ἀφροδίτης ἦν καὶ γυμνὴ ἦν· νικᾶται ὁ Κύπριος τῷ σχήματι καὶ συνέρχεται τῷ ἀγάλματι, καὶ τοῦτο Φιλοστέφανος ἱστορεῖ· Ἀφροδίτη δὲ ἄλλη ἐν Κνίδῳ λίθος ἦν καὶ καλὴ ἦν, ἕτερος ἠράσθη ταύτης καὶ μίγνυται τῇ λίθῳ Ποσίδιππος ἱστορεῖ (4.57.3.1-7).
>
> So the well-known Pygmalion of Cyprus fell in love with an ivory statue; it was of Aphrodite and was naked. The man of Cyprus is captivated by its shapeliness and embraces the statue. This is related by Philostephanus. There was also an Aphrodite in Cnidus, made of marble and beautiful. Another man fell in love with this and has intercourse with the marble, as Poseidippus relates.[57]

Thus from Philostephanus and Clement of Alexandria we learn that Pygmalion was not originally an artist but merely a man who fell in love with a statue of a goddess. The original version to which Clement refers has been lost but we do know that Philostephanus told this story about Pygmalion in his work *Cypriaka,* stories about Cyprus. Philostephanus' version makes Pygmalion "a king of Cyprus, so possessed by the beauty of a cult statue of Aphrodite that in his lust he has sexual relations with it."[58] Clement concludes this excerpt with a reference to another Aphrodite statute that elicits the same reaction from another man. In this second scenario we are told that the man attempts to have sex with the statue.

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[56] Joseph B. Solodow, *The World of Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 215.

[57] Butterworth, 131-3. The Philostephanus fragment reads:
ὁ Πυγμαλίων ἐκεῖνος ἐλεφαντίνου ἠράσθη ἀγάλματος ...Τὸ ἄγαλμα Ἀφροδίτης ἦν καὶ γυμνὴ ἦν ... Νικᾶται ὁ Κύπριος Πυγμαλίων τῷ σχήματι καὶ συνέρχεται τῷ ἀγάλματι, καὶ τοῦτο Φιλοστέφανος ἱστορεῖ ... ἐν τῷ Περὶ Κύπρῳ.

[58] Solodow, 216.

Pliny also discusses the Cnidian Aphrodite but he attributes the statue specifically to Praxiteles and mentions a stain on the statue that stands as proof that the man tried to have sexual relations with the statue.

> Praxitelis aetatem inter statuarios diximus, qui mar-
> moris gloria superavit etiam semet. opera eius sunt
> Athenis in Ceramico, sed ante omnia est non solum Praxi-
> telis, verum in toto orbe terrarum Venus, quam ut viderent,
> multi navigaverunt Cnidum. [...]
> illo enim signo Praxiteles
> nobilitavit Cnidum. aedicula eius tota aperitur, ut con- (36.21.5)
> spici possit undique effigies deae, favente ipsa, ut creditur,
> facta. nec minor ex quacumque parte admiratio est. ferunt
> amore captum quendam, cum delituisset noctu, simulacro
> cohaesisse, eiusque cupiditatis esse indicem maculam.
>
> Praxiteles is an artist whose date I have mentioned among those of the makers of bronze statues, but in the fame of his work in marble he surpasses even himself. There are works by him at Athens in the Cerameicus; and yet superior to anything not merely by Praxiteles, but in the whole world, is the Venus, which many people have sailed to Cnidus to see. [...] For with this statue Praxiteles made Cnidus a famous city. The shrine in which it stands is entirely open so as to allow the image of the goddess to be viewed from every side, and it is believed to have been made in this way with the blessing of the goddess herself. The statue is equally admirable from every angle. There is a story that a man once fell in love with it and hiding by night embraced it, and that stain betrays this lustful act.[59]

Pliny includes the detail in which the man tried to have relations with the statue and the evidence left on the marble, which creates a flaw on the beautiful statue. Although he does not explicitly mention Pygmalion, he harkens back to the Greek versions of this story wherein a man falls in love with a cult statue. In these cases the man is so enamoured that he tries to defy the physical limitations mandated by the nature of it being marble and tries to have relations with the statue. It seems that Ovid conflated the two stories told by Clement of Alexandria, in that he took the reference to Pygmalion falling in love with the statue of Aphrodite and additionally made him the man who tried to lie with the statue. Both of the statues that Clement of Alexandria mentions

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[59] D.E. Eichholz, trans., *Pliny: Natural History*, Vol. X (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 15 - 17.

were tributes to Aphrodite and in Pliny's version of the myth Venus actually blesses the representation of herself. So in the Greek tradition there is a goddess for whom the artists sculpt the statues. Ovid includes a similar reference in his myth, in that Venus is the divinity to whom Pygmalion prays and she is the one who causes the transformation of the statue to take place. Venus, however, does not serve as the model for Pygmalion's statue since he does not intend to create a cult statue but instead wants to create an ideal representation of beauty for himself. Nor does Pygmalion use an earthly model for his conception of ideal beauty. In contrast, the Greek tradition holds that Praxiteles' mistresses, the courtesan Phryne, stood as the human model for his cult statue.[60] This shows that the early Greek myths have artists referring to human models instead of conceptualizing the ideal and thus highlights one of the major changes that Ovid makes to his rendition of the myth.

Ovid changes "Pygmalion from an iconophile king into the sculptor himself, and by this invention – for so it is universally agreed to be – made him the exemplar of the artist's power."[61] Ovid makes a significant alteration to the story in changing Pygmalion from an admirer of art to the creator of ideal beauty. The Greek tradition that Ovid inherits is still apparent, though, because Pygmalion is a sculptor who falls in love with his own creation. Ovid makes him a sculptor but keeps the theme of erotic attraction to a statue. Here we have explored the ancient Greek myths specific to Ovid's Pygmalion myth. However, comparing Ovid's myth with the various myths set forth in the catalogue of the first chapter will allow us to make further connections to the mythic tradition that Ovid inherits.

RELATION OF PYGMALION MYTH AS TOLD BY OVID TO OTHER "IMAGE-MYTHS"

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[60] Christine Mitchell Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 9.
[61] Solodow, 216.

The Palladion myth establishes a precedent within the mythic tradition where humans frequently worship statues. This theme is repeated in the later myths like the myths discussed above with the cult statues of Aphrodite and furthermore in Ovid's myth where the ideas of statue worship and sexual desire become the focal points in the Pygmalion story. The earliest Greek myths from which the Pygmalion story originates establish the popular practice of statue worship. The later accounts of statue worship, such as the accounts of Clement of Alexandria and Pliny, include the detail of sexual desire for statues. Men, enticed by the statues that they worship, act on their arousal and try to have relations with art objects. The Pygmalion story thus derives from the earliest mythic tradition of worshipping wondrous objects such as the Palladion, but in Pygmalion's case, the illusionistic quality of the statue is important. It incites his love and desire for the statue. Therefore it seems that the aesthetic differences between the early cult statues and the later representations of Aphrodite make a difference in the practice of statue worship, in that the illusionistic details affect the ability to rouse eros. However, it is also important to note that the uncanniness of the object does not turn on its illusionistic qualities. The early cult statues were powerful objects of worship without being representational or illusionistic. The Palladion and other early cult statues tended to be wooden slabs with crude features incised on them compared to the marble statues like the Cnidian Aphrodite, which are magnificent, illusionistic marble statues [Fig.4, 5 and Fig.6]. The accomplishment then by Praxiteles with his Cnidian Aphrodite was that he was able to transform "this tradition of the colossal symbol-laden inscrutable idol and replace it ... [with] a body that has clearly been caught in the midst of sudden motion, and emotion, and has been animated by a surge of life that goes well beyond the stately traditions of the cult-statue sculpture."[62] The mythic tradition of

[62] George L. Hersey, *Falling In Love With Statues: Artificial Humans from Pygmalion to the Present*

worshipping statues continued despite the changes in aesthetic values. Ovid then builds on Praxiteles' achievement when he has Pygmalion sculpt a beautiful and enticingly realistic statue of his ideal woman. These realistic qualities elicited the sexual desire and lust that Pygmalion felt for the inanimate statue, which he worshipped. Thus Ovid has combined different aspects from the Greek mythic tradition. He kept the idea of statue worship from the Palladion myth and also included the illusionistic qualities of the later Aphrodite stories that aroused desire in their male worshippers.

The myths of Daedalus' cow and Zeuxis' still life painting set forth another tradition for Ovid, in which animals are deceived by artistic creations. The bull, thinking Daedalus' cow is real, desires to mate with it and the birds, believing that Zeuxis' grapes are real, peck at the painting in an attempt to eat the fruit. In these two myths the animals believe that the wooden cow and painting, respectively, are actually real. The myths praise the artists' skill in faithfully copying nature in their works.[63] Pygmalion, while gazing at the beautiful statue, acquires a desire like the animals, to interact with the statue as he would a real woman – overwhelmed by "beauty they forget the difference between artifice and reality."[64] Pygmalion admires the statue, he dresses it in fine clothes and places it in his bed, and yet these actions are even more compelling than the birds' reactions to art in Zeuxis' story because Pygmalion, himself, is the sculptor. Unlike the bull and the birds that have not been privy to the creation process and are therefore deceived out of ignorance, Pygmalion created the statue. He should know that the statue is not real and yet he still becomes enamoured by it, which perhaps speaks to the power of ideal beauty realized in art versus a mere reflection of nature. Pygmalion creates this statue

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(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 76.

[63] Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 62.

[64] Andrew Stewart, *Art, Desire, and the Body in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 44.

because he is repulsed by the lascivious nature of women in his lifetime. In response to this, he conceptualizes the ideal form of a woman and this is what he falls in love with. Then in answer to his prayer, his ideal, pure and chaste woman ultimately is transformed into a real woman.

The other myth that deals specifically with a statue and thus warrants discussion in this section is the creation of Pandora. This earliest conception of the female gender began as a statue that was sculpted by gods to excite and intrigue men and thus act as a burden and serve as punishment for mankind. Ovid, on the other hand, has Pygmalion sculpt a beautiful statue in response to the behaviour of the corrupt women he observes. It seems that the hope inherent in this action is that the stone sculpture would be more pure than its human foil. Zeus commands Hephaistos to create Pandora as an ideal beauty, in the likeness a goddess, so that she may be irresistible to men. Ovid's myth shows that she was indeed irresistible to men but strangely this disgusts Pygmalion and causes him to think back to the original form, which motivates him to sculpt the form that he conceptualizes. In this way these two myths are similar because as statues, the form of a woman remains pure – desirable yet ideal; whereas, in flesh and blood she serves as a burden to mankind. Another significant parallel is that both myths end in a transformation; a statue is created, the statue is beautiful and tempting, the gods transform the statues into living beings. And in this way Ovid equates Pygmalion's skill to that of Hephaistos, the original sculptor of women. The Pandora myth serves as the inverse for Ovid's tale. The gods sculpt a woman to serve as a punishment for mankind, whereas Pygmalion sculpts a statue to stand as ideal beauty when the women of his time are condemned for lasciviousness. Therefore, Ovid's change to make Pygmalion the artist – not just the mere observer – is a substantial alteration that future renditions of the myth call upon. This change in status seems to reflect an awareness of philosophical concerns. As an artist Pygmalion is aware of the

paradeigma to which he refers whereas a simple observer is ignorant of the choices inherent in executing mimetic art.

PHILOSOPHICAL IMPACTS ON MYTH

A tale about one of Zeuxis' paintings seems to reflect Plato's point in the *Republic* about creating ideal beauty. The Zeuxis myth, accounted for most coherently by Pliny, relates how Zeuxis is commissioned to paint a picture of the most beautiful woman for the temple of Hera in the city of Girgenti. This myth attributes to Zeuxis the ability of the artist to recognize that ideal beauty does not exist on its own in nature, a fact that Plato establishes in the *Republic*. In his account, Pliny writes:

> He was so scrupulously careful that when he was going to produce a picture for the city of Girgenti to dedicate at the public cost in the temple of Laconian Hera he held an inspection of the maidens of the place paraded naked and chose five, for the purpose of reproducing in the picture the most admirable points in the form of each.[65]

Some sources, for example Cicero, assert that Zeuxis wanted to paint a portrait of Helen, specifically, since she was the quintessential beautiful woman in the ancient world.

> [Zeuxis] also said that he wished to paint a picture of Helen so that the portrait though silent and lifeless might embody the surpassing beauty of womanhood. … Zeuxis immediately asked them what girls they had of surpassing beauty. … "Please send me the most beautiful of these girls, while I am painting the picture that I have promised, so that the true beauty may be transferred from the living model to the mute likeness." Then the citizens of Croton by a public decree assembled the girls in one place and allowed the painter to choose whom he wished. He selected five, whose names many poets recorded because they were approved by the judgement of him who must have been the supreme judge of beauty. He chose five because he did not think all the qualities which he sought to combine in a portrayal of beauty could be found in one person, because in no single case has Nature made anything perfect and finished in every part (*De Inventione* 2.1.1-3).[66]

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[65] Rackham, 309.

[66] H. M. Hubbell, trans., *Cicero*: *De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 167-169.

Zeuxis, according to our sources, decided that true beauty could not be found in one person alone, that the most beautiful features found in different women would provide inspiration for ideal beauty. His task, as the artist, lay in selecting the best characteristics of each of these five models so that he could inspire worshippers in the temple with the representation of his ideal beauty. This myth reflects Plato's contention that the aim of an artist to refer to a *paradeigma* when painting. However, the story about Zeuxis relates that he was still dependent on human models and merely pieces together different aspects of beauty. Stephen Halliwell maintains that a painted woman "compounded from different elements of reality" can never be as beautiful as the completely idealized form to which Plato refers.[67] Ovid, on the other hand, realizes the second component of Plato's claim and incorporates it into his myth. Acting from a negative stimulus, Pygmalion, is an artist who looks to the ideal *paradeigma* and sculpts a beautiful woman. For Pygmalion does not create a particular woman pieced together from different aspects of beauty, but an idealized woman – one with whom he falls in love. The fact that Pygmalion creates an ideal woman, not a specific one, builds on the intriguing myth about Zeuxis' creation of ideal beauty. And the Zeuxis myth helps establish a pattern wherein later myths in general, not just the Pygmalion myth, can reflect philosophical concerns. Pygmalion creates his statue based on his own conception of ideal beauty rather than an actual imitation of the "beautiful" parts of different models like Zeuxis.

PHILOSOPHICAL IMPACTS ON OVID'S MYTH

The Zeuxis myth where he paints the most beautiful woman reveals "the task of the artist, in accordance with Plato's theory of art, as surpassing the model of nature and, by improving on

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[67] Halliwell, 129-130.

nature, to realize an ideal beauty in his works."[68] The Pygmalion myth focuses on conceptualizing the ideal versus mimicking the real. He is not just rewarded "for faithfully copying nature" in his work but for realizing ideal beauty.[69] As Ovid describes Pygmalion's statue "you'd surely suppose her alive and ready to move, if modesty didn't preclude it; art was concealed by art to a rare degree."[70] Halliwell's thesis argues that Plato does not condemn mimetic arts but rather offers a challenge to artists to rise above mimesis or mere copying of nature. An artist is able to accomplish this feat, as Pygmalion did, by realizing the ideal form of beauty and then portraying it through an artistic medium. Ovid's inclusion of the creation of ideal beauty rather than the mere worship of it, places Pygmalion in the role of artist not just viewer or worshipper. Pygmalion's motivation as sculptor stems from a desire to make something pure and ideal in order to contrast the realities of a corrupt human race. This desire reflects an awareness of Plato's theory wherein the artist has the ability to refer to an ideal model when constructing his art object.

AFTERLIFE OF THE PYGMALION MYTH AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Later accounts of this mythic story notice and further elaborate upon these new elements. Ovid introduces into the mythic tradition the fact that Pygmalion is an artist, who aspires to an ideal of beauty rather than a mere observer who simply lusts after another's creation. Ovid has injected this important detail into the old, and somewhat kinky erotic stories that the Greeks pass down in their mythic tradition. Victor Stoichiţă writes that "Pygmalion's statue is the fruit of his imagination and of his 'art,' and the woman whom the gods gave him for a spouse is a strange

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[68] Kris and Kurz, 61.
[69] Ibid, 62.
[70] Raeburn, 394-6.

creature, an artifact endowed with a soul and a body, but nevertheless a fantasy."[71] The metamorphosis that Ovid adds at the end of his story blurs the line between art and reality and adds the fantastical element that Stoichiţă talks about. Ovid's Pygmalion myth takes the selective ability of the artist and adds divine intervention so that there is a metamorphosis from ivory statue to living flesh. One of Stoichiţă's conclusions is that "the story of Pygmalion is an artistic myth that incorporates, as secondary contributions, both magic and technique."[72] Ovid sets forth the premise that ideal beauty can be produced in an artistic medium by a human craftsman – the gods and goddesses are no longer the only ones capable of such a feat. Even though the gods remain the only ones capable of adding their divine magic to inanimate objects and thereby create life, it was Ovid's creation of ideal beauty and his devotion to this statue that motivated Venus to transform an art object into a living being.

The "Pygmalion Effect," as Stoichiţă terms it, influences the perception of the artist from Ovid's time all the way up to Alfred Hitchcock's production of "Vertigo." One of the conclusions that Stoichiţă makes is that the "Pygmalion Effect is an effect of a double."[73] Hitchcock, centuries after Ovid's myth, explores the idea of falling in love with a double, and the repercussions of such idealization. In a twisted game of deceit, the main character Scottie falls in love with a woman named Madeline. It is ultimately revealed that Madeline is actually a character portrayed by an actress named Judy, but the imitation of Madeline remains more desirable to Scottie than the actual woman. The ideas of imitation versus reality that Ovid develops in his Pygmalion myth still affect modern conceptions of art.

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[71] Victor Ieronim Stoichiţă, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3.
[72] Ibid, 203.
[73] Ibid, 204.

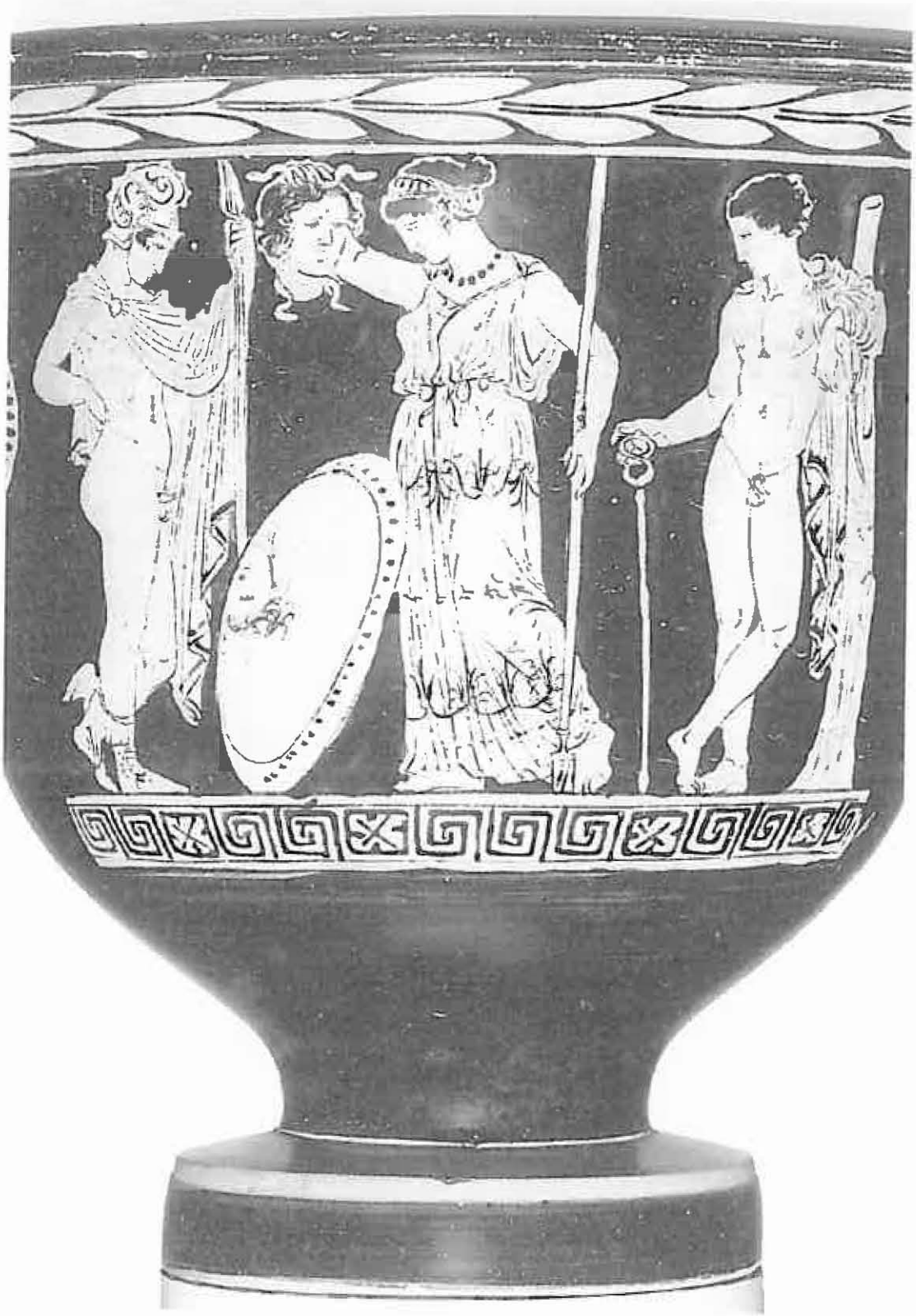

Figure 1: Perseus with reflection of the Gorgon on a Bell Krater, LIMC VII, 2 (pg. 285) 400-375 BC

Figure 2: Perseus with reflection of the Gorgon on a Calyx Krater, LIMC VII, 2 (pg. 285) 400-375 BC

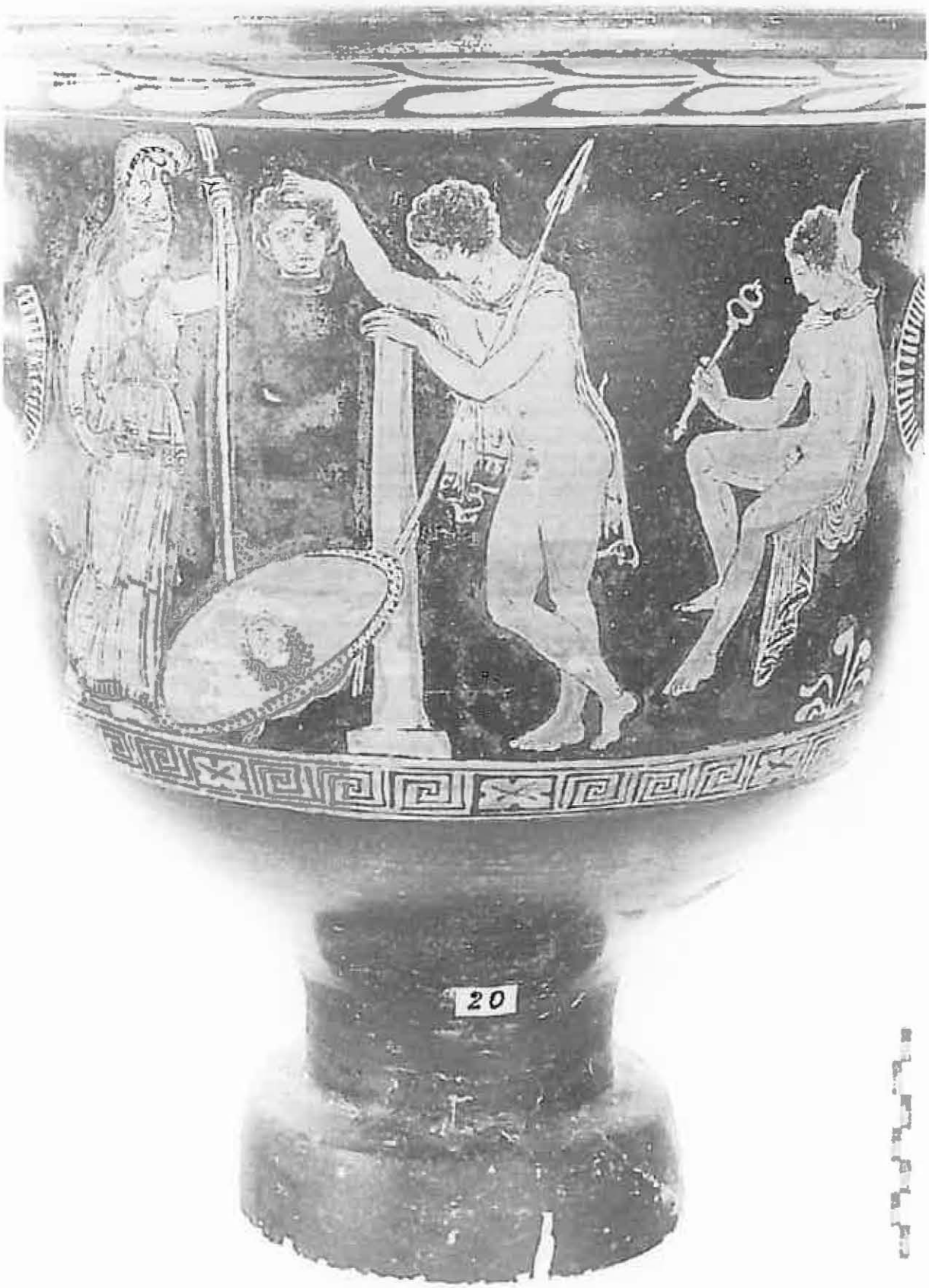

Figure 3: Perseus with reflection of the Gorgon on a Bell Krater, LIMC VII, 2 (pg. 285) 400-375 BC

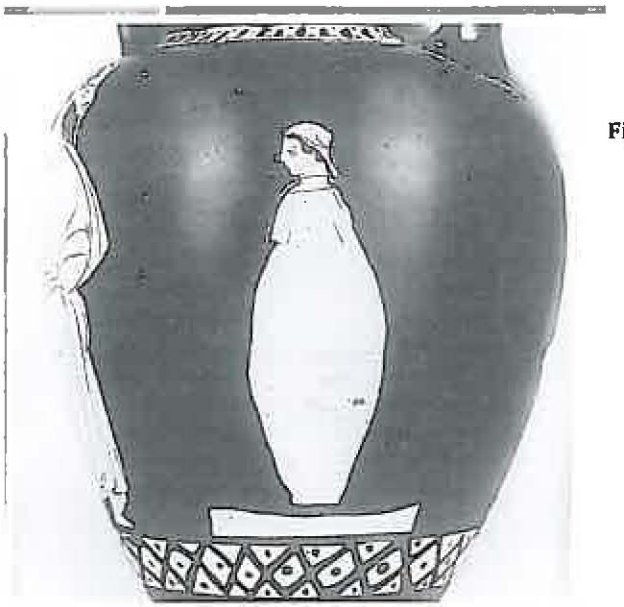

Figure 4: Pandora LIMC VII, 2 (pg. 100)

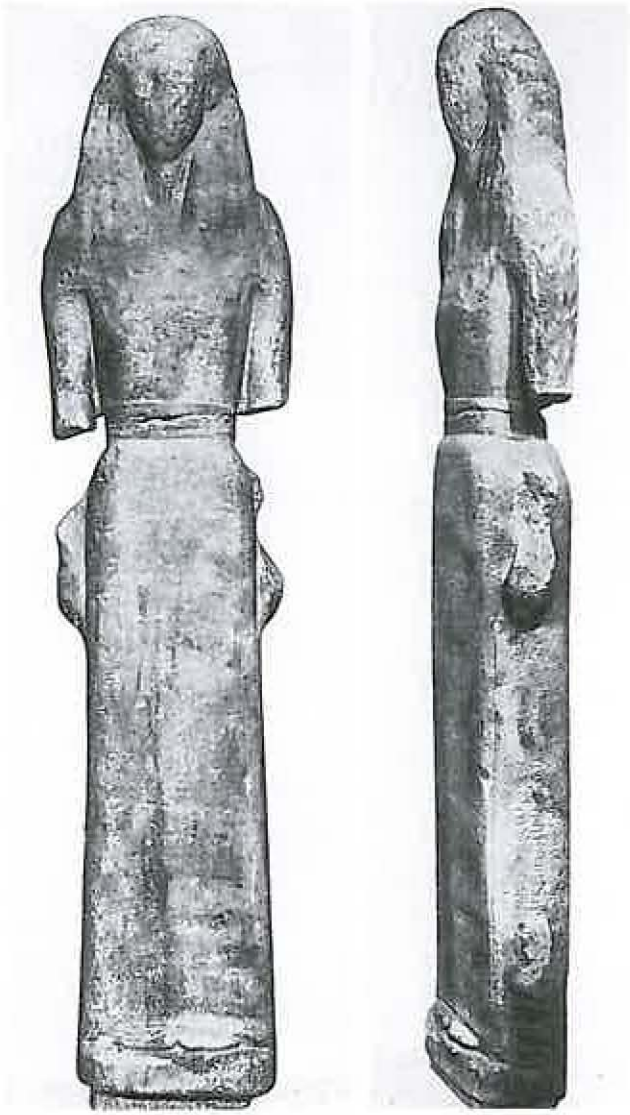

Figure 5: Nikandre Statue, example of Archaic Greek Cult Statue

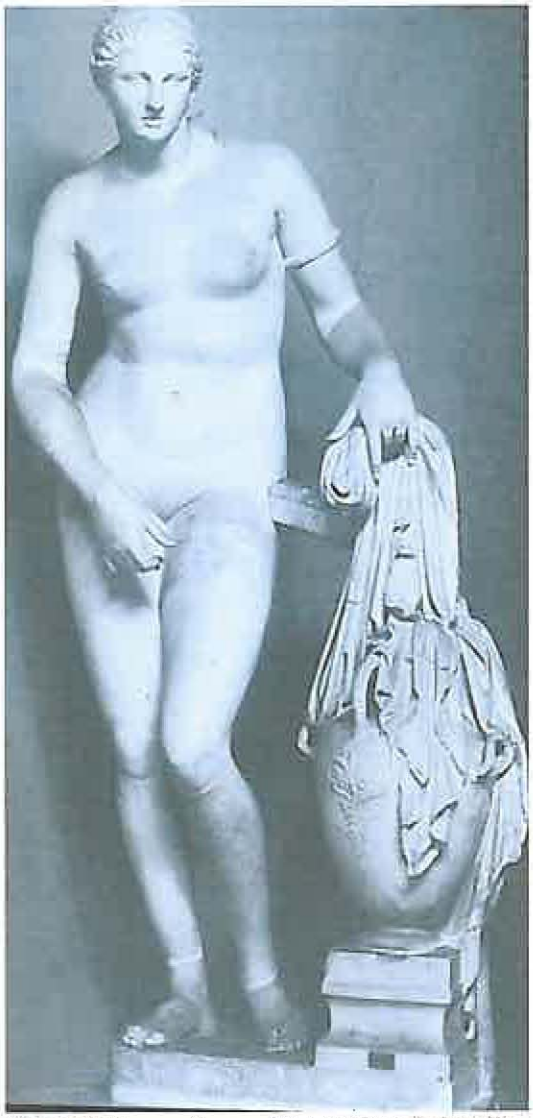

Figure 6: Roman Copy of the Cnidian Aphrodite

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