

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE PERSEUS AND PYGMALION LEGENDS IN LATER NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE
AND ART, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE INFLUENCE OF OVID'S METAMORPHOSES

by

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A B S T R A C T

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The concern of this thesis is to show the influence of Ovid's Metamorphoses in nineteenth century England, particularly in the work of Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. Two episodes from the Metamorphoses are examined in detail: Perseus and Pygmalion. Ovid's sources are discussed and a catalogue of other references to the Perseus legend is included.

It is argued that Ovid saw the rescue of Andromeda as the climax of the Perseus story, a view which is echoed in both Burne-Jones and Morris. The three versions of the story are compared and similarities in style and narrative detail emphasised. The Perseus section ends with a brief catalogue of other nineteenth century versions of the legend.

Ovid is the only readily available source for the Pygmalion story, It is argued that he takes the demythologised story about a man who has a sexual relationship with a statue and restores some elements of its original mythical form (an aetiology of the ἱερὸς γάμος between the king of Cyprus and Venus). It will be suggested that the statue is identified with Venus and that this identification also occurs in Burne-Jones and Morris. The appeal of the story for the Victorians is discussed and a number of other versions are examined.

The Perseus Legend

Literary and artistic treatments of the Perseus theme in antiquity have been treated, though not exhaustively, by J.M.Woodward, Perseus. A Study in Greek Art and Legend (Cambridge 1937). She argues that certain elements of the legend are early: the Andromeda episode seems to be later than the Danaë and Gorgon stories. She traces the legend from Hesiod, Simonides and Pherecydes of Athens through Josephus, the rationalising attempts of Pausanias, and John of Antioch. She also discusses works of art illustrating the legend, such as the red-figure hydria in the British Museum (E.181) which shows the death of Medusa¹. Woodward does not, however, seek to trace the development of the legend, confining herself to a useful catalogue of its occurrences².

For his own version of the story, Ovid seems to have turned to Hesiod³. He includes only two Graiae: the usual number was three but Hesiod Theogony 270ff has only two⁴. The influence of Hesiod can also be seen in the Atlas and Medusa episodes. At Theogony 517ff, he describes how Atlas holds up the heavens, a detail included by Ovid at M.4. 662⁵. He also explains the naming of Chrysaor and Pegasus, born when Medusa's head is struck off (Theogony 280-3). This detail is echoed by Ovid at M.4. 785.

Hesiod seems to be the only source for a connection between Medusa and Poseidon. He declares that Medusa was the only mortal Gorgon and describes how she "lay with the Dark-Haired One" (Theogony 277-9). Ovid expands the reference in his narration; he explains that Medusa was punished for desecrating the temple of Minerva when she was robbed of her virginity there by Poseidon (M.4. 798-9).

There is some controversy as to whether Ovid knew the lost Andromeda of Euripides. Haupt-Ehwald think not but Bömer 198 believes that he did:

"Die Ansicht von Haupt-Ehwald (zu IV 663-752), dass Ovid Euripides nicht benutzt haben könnte (weil Euripides das pactum IV 703 {vgl. IV 704 lex} und Phineus nicht kenne: Frg. 140ffN² 185ff Mette),

ist nicht stichhaltig; sie wirkt wegen der häufigen unmittelbaren Hinweise bei Haupt-Ehwald auf Euripides-Fragmente (so IV 664 auf Frg. 114; IV 675 auf Frg. 125; IV 608f auf Frg. 126f) auch nicht recht glaubhaft."

Lafaye, Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide et leurs modèles grecs (Paris 1904) 143ff, although not mentioning this specific question, argues strongly that Ovid was greatly influenced by Euripides throughout the Metamorphoses. He cites as examples the influence of the Bacchae, Hecuba, Aegeus and Phaethon and points out the many features of style the poets have in common (143). The evidence would seem to suggest that Ovid did know the Andromeda although conclusive proof is not possible in the present state of our knowledge.

NOTES

1. This vase could well have been Burne-Jones' inspiration for his picture of the death of Medusa. Certainly her posture (headless and leaning on her hands) is reproduced in Burne-Jones' work.
2. There are several major omissions in Mrs. Woodward's list of literary treatments. For example, she makes no mention of Herodotus, the lost Andromeda of Euripides or Lycophron. Herodotus is interesting because he explains how the Persians claimed descent from Perses, son of Perseus and Andromeda. Lycophron also relates most of the legend, albeit very elliptically. A fuller list of references is therefore appended (page 4).
3. Ovid does, however, clearly indicate his knowledge of the other variations within the traditional account. cf. W. Clausen, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry" G.R.B.S. 5 (1964) 183:
"Now a scholar-poet could con and compare texts; pluck a hapax out of Homer and define it in a context of his own making, perhaps to spite another scholar-poet; employ an obscure variant of a myth or legend, the while deftly signaling to an alert reader his awareness of other variants as well."
4. West on Theogony 273 points out:
"the original dyad which later becomes a triad is a common enough phenomenon, as Usener has shown in Rh. Mus 1903, pp 323ff (cf. Jane Harrison, Prolegomena pp. 286ff). The Harpies are another case."
5. Ovid's version of the Atlas episode is, in fact, a conflation of two different traditions. The first, mentioned in Hesiod and Homer, is the notion of Atlas as supporter of the skies or guardian of the pillars of heaven. The second is the story of Atlas' encounter with Heracles, when Heracles tries to steal the Golden Apples of the Hesperides.

Ovid draws the two strands together, using the device of Themis' oracle to make Perseus the instrument of Atlas' downfall. As Bömer 191 notes, this leaves Heracles later encountering a mountain, not a living being.

Partial Catalogue of References to the Perseus Legend

<u>Homer</u>	<u>Il.</u> 14. 320f	Reference to Danaë as Perseus' mother
	<u>Il.</u> 5. 741	Reference to Gorgon's head on Athene's aegis.
	<u>Il.</u> 8. 349	Hector's eyes like those of a Gorgon
	<u>Il.</u> 11. 36f	Description of a Gorgon on Agamemnon's shield.
	<u>Od.</u> 1. 51f	Reference to Atlas
	<u>Od.</u> 7. 245	Reference to Calypso as Atlas' daughter
	<u>Od.</u> 11. 634f	Reference to the head of the Gorgon
	<u>Od.</u> 1. 72	Reference to Phorcys
<u>Hesiod</u>	<u>Od.</u> 13. 96	Reference to Phorcys
	<u>Od.</u> 13. 345	Reference to Phorcys
	<u>Theogony</u> 270ff	Reference to the Graiae and the Gorgons, giving their names. Also tells of birth of Chrysaor and Pegasus, giving reasons for their names.
	<u>Theogony</u> 517ff	Reference to Atlas bearing the heavens on his shoulders (in the land of the Hesperides).
	<u>Shield of Heracles</u> 216ff	Description of Perseus fleeing the other Gorgons with the head of Medusa (scene on the shield)
<u>Simonides</u>	Fr. 27	Danaë at sea, praying to Zeus to save Perseus and herself.
<u>Pindar</u>	<u>Pythian Odes</u> 12. 7ff	Description of the death dirge of the Gorgons, heard by Perseus when he killed Medusa. Also brief reference to Polydectes and Danaë
	<u>Pythian Odes</u> 10. 31ff	Reference to the banquet for Apollo shared by Perseus with his people. Reference to his slaying of the Gorgon with Athene's aid.
<u>Herodotus</u>	7. 61	Description of the Persian soldiers. Reference to the fact that they took their name from Perses, son of Perseus and Andromeda.
	7. 150	Reference to Perses as the founder of the Persian race.

Plato. Symposium I98c Socrates fears that Gorgias'
head might turn him to stone

Menander Dyscolos I53ff Reference to Perseus'
wings and ability to
turn people to stone.

Herodotus 2. 91

Description of the temple to Perseus at Chemmis and the honours given to him by the Egyptians there .

Pherecydes F. Gr. H. (3) fr. 10 = Σ ad A.R.4. 1091

Tells the story of Perseus' birth despite Acrisius' efforts to avoid his fate.
Tells how Danaë and Perseus are set afloat and land on Seriphos, where they are found by Dictys.

F.Gr.H (3) fr.11 = Σ ad A.R.4. 1515

Perseus at Polydectes' feast. The visit to the Graiae. With the help of Athene and Hermes, Perseus faces the Gorgons and kills Medusa. He returns to Seriphos, uses the head on Polydectes, then gives it to Athene for her aegis. The helmet, sandals and kibisis are returned to Hermes.

F.Gr.H (3) fr. 12 = Σ ad A.R. 4. 1091

Tells how Perseus accidentally kills Acrisius during the discus-throwing at Larissa.

Euripides Electra 458ff

Description of Perseus fleeing with Medusa's head, Hermes at his side (scene on Achilles' shield)

Lycophron Alexandra 834ff

Tells of the rescue of Andromeda, the death of Medusa and the birth of Chrysaor and Pegasus. Also refers to the theft of the eye belonging to the three Graiae.

(Pseudo) Eratosthenes

Cat.15

Description of the Constellation of Cepheus. Refers to the story told by Euripides that he was Andromeda's father and she was rescued from a sea-monster by Perseus.

Cat. 16

Constellation of Cassiopeia. Tells how, according to Sophocles, she angered the Nereids and brought punishment upon Andromeda.

Cat.17.

Constellation of Andromeda, placed there by Minerva because of Perseus' virtue. According to Euripides, she left her parents and went to Argos with Perseus.

(Fraser 2.597 n. 303 "I cannot enter here into the innumerable problems connected with the Eratosthenic καταστροφούς in the Suda - Life of Eratosthenes, p.368 West ... The frequency with which Erat. is cited as an authority, and also quoted as author of pseudonymous lists of stars and catasterisms, in the so-called Epitome (ἀστροθεσίαι ζῳδίων)

<u>Manilius</u>	I.350ff	Reference to the constellations.
	I.436	Reference to Cetus.
	I.616	Reference to the constellation of Andromeda.
	2.28ff	Mention of Perseus/Andromeda story.
	5.538ff	Story of Andromeda's exposure and deliverance.

and the numerous late Aratus - commentaries and astronomical literature, from Hyginus onwards, indicates a tradition that an original work by him on this general theme has existed, but its form remains, in spite of Martin's efforts, quite uncertain'')

Apollodorus 2.4.1-5

Tells the whole story from the oracle of Acrisius to his death at Perseus' hands. Also names Perseus' children.

(Although Apollodorus was writing in the second century B.C., the extant text is much later, first or second century A.D.)

Strabo 10.5.10

Tells how Perseus was found with his mother by Dictys and was reared on Seriphos. He returned with the head of the Gorgon and turned the Seriphians to stone in revenge against Polydectes.

Josephus History of the Jewish War 3. 420

Reference to the impression of Andromeda's chains still visible in the rocks at Joppa.

Lucian Dialogue of the Sea Gods 14

Tells the story of the rescue of Andromeda in detail, the death of Medusa more briefly.

Pausanias 1.21.3

Description of the Gorgon's head on the South wall of the Acropolis.

1.22.7

Reference to a painting of Perseus in the Acropolis.

1.23.7

Reference to Myron's Perseus

2.16.2-4

The death of Acrisius

2.18.1

Reference to a shrine to Perseus

2.20.7

Reference to a stone head of Medusa

2.21. 5-6

Medusa as a warrior-queen, killed by Perseus. Alternatively, she was a wild woman.

2.23.7

Reference to the underground prison of Danaë

4.35.9

Reference to a spring whose water is alleged to run red from the blood of the sea-monster, washed off by Perseus there.

8.47.5

Athene alleged to have given some of Medusa's hair to Cepheus, ruler of Tegea.

- Pausanias 9.34.2 Reference to Athene dressed in a tunic decorated with Medusa's head.
- Hyginus Fab. 244 Reference to Perseus as the son of Zeus and Danaë
- Aelian De Natura Animalium 3. 37 Story of the frogs of Seriphos which are silent because Perseus prayed to Zeus for their silence after the battle with Medusa.
- Athenaeus Deipnosophistae 5.21 Discussion of the nature of a Gorgon. Story attributed to Alexander of Myndus that they were real creatures whose eyes and breath could kill. They had a mane which hung over their eyes and was shaken back to kill their victims.
- John of Antioch F.H.G.4. fr.1.8 Reference to Medusa as a beautiful courtesan, Pegasus as her horse.
- F.H.G.4. fr.6.18 An attempt to rationalise the story . Perseus as the son of Zeus of Pixos and Danaë who establishes his own kingdom, having beheaded the maiden Medusa.

Ovid's Version of the Perseus Story

Ovid chooses to retell this story across two books of the Metamorphoses, from the end of Book 4 into Book 5. This break in the narrative is significant; effectively it divides the tale into two separate sections. In Book 4 Ovid relates the stories of Medusa, Atlas and Andromeda (but not in chronological order) while Book 5 concentrates on the battle between Perseus and Phineus. The tale is ended somewhat abruptly with only a brief reference to Proteus and the death of Polydectes.

In his narrative Ovid manipulates the time sequence, introduces recurring symbols and images and varies the tone and atmosphere, particularly between the two books. He, as Otis Ovid as An Epic Poet (Cambridge 1966) 159 has suggested, does not present a single image of Perseus as the epic hero, his version of Aeneas. His treatment is much more subtle and varied, in keeping with his declared theme of metamorphosis. Far from being "Ovid ... at his worst" (Otis 164) the Perseus story is a skilful parody of epic, sometimes serious, sometimes light-hearted.

The narration begins in medias res: we discover Perseus winging his way over Libya, having already beheaded Medusa. Drops of blood from the head fall on the sand and become serpents, permanently infesting the whole land¹. Snakes have a peculiar symbolic importance throughout Book 4 (and, to some extent, Book 3), a theme explored but perhaps overstated by Frances Norwood in her article "Unity in the Diversity of Ovid's Metamorphoses" C.J. 59 (1964) 170-174. There is no doubt that the serpent is a powerful symbol, especially in the Theban cycle. Cadmus and Harmonia have been changed into snakes, Medusa's head is covered with snakes, Libya is infested with snakes, Andromeda is threatened by a sea-snake. The difficulty is to explain the significance of the image.

The serpent has always been a potent symbol, being chosen to guard precious possessions (e.g. the Golden Fleece, Atlas' tree of golden apples) and being sacred to various gods (for example, Mars).

The story of Tiresias illustrates the frightening magical power of the snake (M.3. 322ff.)². Serpents are linked with healing powers through Aesculapius but with revenge and horror through the Furies and Hydra. Fontenrose Python. A Study of Delphic Myth and Its Origins (Berkeley 1959) shows there to be a link between snakes, and sea and death³. He asserts that snakes were constantly associated with death and that the sea was identified with "either death's realm or the road thither"(142). A natural extension of this image would, of course, be the battle with a sea-snake.

Fontenrose explains that the snake can be identified as the Enemy, the embodiment of the forces of chaos, destruction, inaction and death⁴. Ovid's snakes certainly seem to embody all these aspects, most particularly death. He uses the snake-motif as a linking image through Book 4, recalling previous incidents each time it appears. Thus, for example, the infestation of Libya is later balanced by Perseus' ridding Ethiopia of its sea-serpent.

There seem to be several reasons for beginning the tale with the Libyan episode. Firstly it enables the poet to begin with a startling metamorphosis, not only of the land but also of the man who is flying like a bird. Perseus is introduced as an already successful hero; his mission is apparently accomplished. Moreover, the power of Medusa's head is immediately emphasised. By including this and the following Atlas episode, Ovid is able to build up dramatic tension before the rescue of Andromeda without losing his audience's attention. There is a strong visual quality about each of these episodes and the vividness of their portrayal means that neither can be dismissed as mere padding of the main story. Each can stand on its own.

In the description of Perseus being blown about by the winds, the number three is emphasised;

"ter gelidas arctos, ter cancro bracchia vidit." (M.4.625)

This number has mystical connotations (in the rites of the dead, for example) and it recurs at the end of the book when Perseus sets up three altars to the gods who helped him (M.4. 753)⁵. The sense of wandering is emphasised in the phrase "nunc huc, nunc illuc" (M.4. 623) but Ovid

does not strain the patience of his audience with endless descriptions of the lands over which Perseus flies. Instead he introduces a second adventure, Perseus' encounter with Atlas. We are aware of the distance travelled by the hero because the Hesperides are, as is well known, at the end of the earth.

Atlas is described as the greatest of beings, his lands and herds are boundless and he owns the golden apple-tree. He is given the epithet "Iapetionides", a recondite patronymic in the epic manner. In this Ovid appears to be following Hesiod (Theogony 528) and thus the patronymic calls to mind the other giant, all too unfortunate, who is also described in this way - Prometheus. According to Hesiod (Theogony 517) Atlas was, in fact, the brother of Prometheus, (as well as Meneotius and Epimetheus) and there are many similarities in their stories. Prometheus did not actually become a mountain but he was chained to one by Zeus (Perseus' father) (Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound 18 ff.). Moreover, it was as a result of Prometheus' action in giving fire to men that Zeus ordered Hephaestus to mould Pandora out of the earth. There is even a legend which states that Prometheus actually created man out of the earth himself (M.1. 80ff.). The linking of the two giants in this way brings to mind images of petrification, bodies made of earth and disaster following the wrath of a god, which prepare for Atlas' own metamorphosis.

Perseus addresses Atlas and we are gradually aware that something is amiss. He is somehow a little less modest than might have been hoped, his tone a little too brash:

"'hospes' ait Perseus illi, 'seu gloria tangit
te generis magni, generis mihi Iuppiter auctor;
sive es mirator rerum, mirabere nostras.'" (M.4. 639-641)

Atlas' reaction to his visitor is, however, extreme. He misinterprets the oracle of Themis, which really refers to Heracles, and fears that Perseus has come to rob his apple-tree (the snake-motif appears again with the disclosure that the guardian of Atlas' garden is a serpent). By using the device of the oracle (according to Bömer {IV-V} 195, a fiction of Ovid's), the poet makes us aware that he knows the other legend and at the same time furnishes a reason for what happens.

When Atlas reacts violently, Perseus retaliates but soon realises that he cannot win:

" ... quis enim par esset Atlantis
viribus? ... "

(M.4. 653-4)

This gloss has a deflating effect upon the status of the hero; the underlying impression seems to be that Perseus was fairly beaten, "viribus inferior", and so used some unfair advantage. The very act of justifying Perseus' behaviour seems to undercut his heroic status. The description of the petrification of Atlas is particularly vivid, recalling the description of the mountain at Aeneid 4. 246ff.⁶ Atlas now has to carry the stars on his shoulders.

The next day Perseus continues his journey and the expected encounter with Andromeda occurs. In his introduction to the episode Ovid uses the word "iniustus" to double effect (M.4. 671). Not only is it a criticism of Ammon and the punishment he exacts but it also emphasises Andromeda's status as innocent victim. Poor Andromeda has a strange passivity throughout. She seems to be an object rather than a person; things are done to or with her but not by her. First she is used as a sacrifice to her mother's pride⁷. Then, after her rescue, she is used as a reward for the killing of the serpent. Finally, in Book 5, Phineus and Perseus fight over her as if she were a piece of booty.

When Perseus first sees Andromeda, he falls unknowingly (in scius") in love. Ovid uses the epithet "Abantiades" to describe Perseus at this point, perhaps to emphasise the human side of Perseus' nature rather than the divine (Danaë was Abas' grand-daughter). Andromeda is so still that if it were not for the movement of her hair and the tears falling from her eyes⁸, Perseus would have mistaken her for a statue. This is not just a pretty conceit on Ovid's part. Throughout the Metamorphoses he emphasises the hardness of stone and the softness of flesh, using the physical properties to stress the metaphorical. Thus, when a woman is hard and heartless, she becomes stone (Aglauros, Anaxarete, the Propoetides). Lack of love and human feeling results in lack of humanity. On the other hand, when

true love and kindness is present, stone becomes flesh (Pygmalion, Deucalion and Pyrrha). When Perseus first sees Andromeda, she is as stone but his love melts her and she becomes a woman once more⁹. Note that this is the only occasion in the whole Perseus episode when he is able to perform the transformation this way round; when he uses the Gorgon's head the change is from flesh to stone.

Andromeda's stony appearance is conveyed by the word "marmoreum", marble. She was Ethiopian and, as we have already seen in Book 2, the skins of her people were turned black by Phaethon. Moreover, Ovid describes her as dark-skinned at Ars Amatoria 3. 191 ("Alba decent fuscas: albis, Cepheï, placebas") and asserts that the colour of her skin did not prevent her from gaining Perseus' love at Ars Amatoria 2. 643. In view of this, it is all the more striking that he should now describe her as having the appearance of the whitest of white stones, marble. The reassertion of the stone/flesh motif also serves, of course, to remind the audience of the power of the Gorgon's head.

Perseus now addresses Andromeda. His expressions of admiration have a familiar ring, employing as he does the metaphor of the chains of love, frequently found in elegiac poetry¹⁰. This gives his speech a rather stylized, artificial quality, described by Segal 322 as "the conventional gallantry of Perseus' little speech, with its hackneyed metaphor ... "

Elegy is followed by epic for Perseus next demands to know Andromeda's name, her country and why she is in such a predicament. Ovid is here parodying an epic convention noted by Williams in his article "A Theophany in Theocritus" C.Q. 21 (1971) 137ff. n.6:

"These particulars - name, provenance, destination or business - were the essential information a stranger was expected to provide in epic, as in Polyphemus' inquiry:

ὦ ξείνοι, τίνας ἐστέ; πόθεν πλεῖθύγρὰ κέλευθα;
ἢ τι κατὰ πρῆξιν ἢ μασιδίως ἀλάλησθε,
οἷά τε ληϊστῆρες ὑπεῖρ ἄλα τοῦτ' ἀλόωνται
ψυχὰς παρθέμενοι, κακὸν ἀλλοδαποῖσι φέροντες; (l. 252-5)"

Williams goes on to give several other examples. By introducing two different literary conventions so rapidly and in such unlikely circumstances, Ovid is clearly indicating that this is not a heroic episode to be taken too seriously.

The parody is sustained as Andromeda, chained naked to a rock and with a horrible death approaching, does not dare to reply - out of modesty. As a further touch of absurdity, Ovid also describes her attempts to hide her face in her hands, attempts prevented by the chains. Andromeda's sense of modesty and decorum seems rather misplaced in the circumstances and it is possible that Ovid is poking fun at the difference between the way real people behave and the way literary heroes and heroines act. It is, of course, an indication of the poet's great skill that we can think of Perseus and Andromeda as "real", rather than mere literary figures.

Unable to act in any other way, Andromeda follows the only course of action left to her; she weeps. As she has been vividly portrayed as more a statue than a woman, the image of her quite still with only tears falling down her cheeks invites comparison with the image of Niobe after her petrification. Niobe's story is told by Ovid with a great deal of sympathy and the final scene in which the mother, now marble, still continues to weep for her dead children is particularly moving (M.6. 305ff.)

Unlike Niobe, however, Andromeda eventually speaks again. She is afraid that her silence will be taken as a sign of guilt, her manners and sensibilities being those of the court. Such a way of thinking and behaving is, however, incongruous in her present circumstances.

After this lull in the action, excitement returns with the arrival of the sea-serpent crashing through the waves. Suddenly it is revealed that Cepheus and Cassiope are at hand. Bömer seems to consider this to be a dramatic necessity and believes that tension is built up as the audience wonders whether all four will be eaten by

the monster. Certainly Cepheus has to be near in order for Perseus to bargain with him over the rescue of Andromeda but again it seems incongruous to reveal the parents' presence in this way. It is also startling for the audience which has, until now, imagined the lovers to be alone.

The sense of excitement is further reduced as Perseus gives a short autobiography and demands his price for rescuing the girl. Her grief-stricken parents agree; as Ovid declares "quis enim dubitaret?" Although Ovid is mocking the character of Perseus as "hero", his humour is not malicious and he emphasises the fact that Perseus is really in love, being moved by that love to perform a genuinely heroic deed (unlike the turning of Atlas to stone or even, it could be argued, the murder of Medusa while she was asleep). Andromeda's parents offer not only her hand but even their kingdom for her life yet Ovid makes it clear that Perseus takes his bride "indotata" (M.4. 758).

The serpent is now at hand and Perseus acts. The description of their fight is particularly vivid. Ovid does not over-extend the scene. He builds up tension by taking as much time to describe Perseus' delaying tactics as the actual struggle. The opening simile of the Balearic sling¹¹ is especially effective. It emphasises speed yet is actually describing distance and reinforces the deadliness of Perseus' attack. Having outmanoeuvred the beast, the hero plunges down upon its back "utque Iovis praepes" (M.4. 714). Perseus was, of course, the son of Jupiter and with his winged sandals and aggressive behaviour could rightly be compared with an eagle. The monster has attacked a shadow on the water, mistaking it for reality (a common error throughout the Metamorphoses¹²) but it is to pay for its gullibility (again, a frequent result of such a mistake).

The eagle/snake image has already occurred shortly before this, in the Salmacis - Hermaphroditus episode (M. 4. 362ff.), but now the effect is quite different. In the Salmacis-Hermaphroditus story, it is the snake which is the more dangerous combatant, as it winds itself

around the bird. Not so here. Perseus, swift as the eagle, swoops down and buries his curved sword (a clever visual identification with the curved talon) in the beast's back. As the fight continues, Ovid introduces a touch of realism. Perseus is wearing the magic winged sandals but the feathers have become so heavy with water that he dare not risk using them any more¹³. Having abandoned this magical aid, Perseus braces himself against a rock, holding on with his left hand, and lunges at the creature with his right¹⁴. The beast is defeated.

There is another sudden revelation, like the presence of Andromeda's parents, when applause breaks out along the shore. Thus the scene which began by concentrating attention upon the two lovers has now expanded to include groups of spectators and even an audience of gods, who are also said to clap their appreciation of Perseus' deed (though Ammon's reaction is not mentioned). Bömer 214 feels that this moment has a circus atmosphere; it undoubtedly serves to break the audience's concentration after the combat and provides a release of tension. Perseus is hailed as "auxiliumque domus servatoremque ..." (737) a phrase which might be reminiscent of "Iovi Optimo Maximo Servatori Conservatori" according to Bömer 215.

Andromeda, in her role as object not person, is described as "pretiumque et causa laboris". This phrase indicates that Perseus has reaped a reward which is deserved. It is almost as if the winning of Andromeda is the real purpose of his mission. She is the "causa" in two ways. Firstly, she causes him to labour because of her physical danger; that is to say if she had not been in that predicament he would not have been forced to fight the monster. Secondly, she is his motivation for facing such a danger; he is spurred on by his love for her. Thus, having passed the test, he is given the reward, "pretium".

All the other stories in Book 4 tell of love which results in metamorphosis from human into another form (a flower or an animal, for example). Pyramus and Thisbe do not themselves change form on death but their love results in the staining of the mulberry. Salmacis

and Hermaphroditus undergo a very strange metamorphosis, becoming neither male nor female. The story of Perseus' and Andromeda's love has no such unfortunate ending so it is the only tale in this book which has a happy result.

The preceding story, that of Cadmus and Harmonia, is a mixture of joy and tragedy. Their love eventually triumphs but they are left in the shape of snakes and their story forms a transition from misfortune to happiness. In fact, the only metamorphosis to occur in the Perseus-Andromeda episode is the important but metaphorical change of Andromeda from stone to flesh, death to life rather than the other way round (as with the preceding stories in the book). The human, loving Perseus is contrasted with the "heroic", death-dealing figure seen in the Atlas episode.

Immediately after Andromeda's rescue Ovid includes another aetiological tale, the forming of coral when the Gorgon's head is placed on some seaweed (M.4. 744ff.). The "scientific" tone of this explanation is also evident in a similar interlude (M.1. 416ff.) just before the Apollo-Daphne episode. In this case, Ovid describes the creation of life from the mud of the Nile, likening this process to what happened at the beginning of the world. He stresses the importance of heat and moisture to the generation of life¹⁵, which is, of course, scientifically sound (M.1. 430-433). Apart from providing a pseudo-scientific explanation for the nature of coral, the episode also reminds the audience of the power of the Gorgon's head and at the same time provides relief after the great battle (the explanation of the generation of life, by contrast, leads into the battle between a snake, Python, and Apollo).

Perseus shows his piety by setting up three altars to the divinities who have given him aid; Jupiter his father; Minerva his sister at whose bidding, according to some versions, he killed Medusa; Mercury, provider of the winged sandals. The sacrificial victims reflect the status of the receiver. Only after these religious observances does the wedding take place, at which Perseus

receives the "tanti praemia facti" (757) - Andromeda.

Bacchus, Perseus' half-brother, provides the wine for the feast. He is used throughout Book 4 as a linking thread and balance is maintained by his reintroduction, albeit somewhat artificially, at the end. Book 4 begins with one of Bacchus' festivals actually taking place, a festival spurned by the daughters of Minyas. As they spin, they tell each other stories; Pyramus and Thisbe, Venus and Mars, Hyperion and Leucothoe, Clytie. The god is then mentioned again to remind the audience of the setting before the story-telling recommences:

"pars fieri potuisse negant, pars omnia veros

posse deos memorant: sed non et Bacchus in illis" (272-3)

The tale of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus follows. Then Bacchus visits his revenge upon the Minyeides. He also provides the link with the next tale, that of his aunt Ino. In case his presence is forgotten, Ovid even describes how Ino calls on Bacchus in her madness:

"'Euhoe Bacche' sonat: Bacchi sub nomine Iuno

risit ... " (523-4)

The story of Ino is followed directly by that of Cadmus and Harmonia but once again, in the link between this tale and the Perseus story, Bacchus is deliberately introduced:

"sed tamen ambobus versae solacia formae

magna nepos dederat, quem debellata colebat

India, quem positis celebrabat Achaia templis;

solus Abantiades ab origine cretus eadem

Acrisius superest, qui moenibus arceat urbis

Argolicae contraque deum ferat arma genusque

non putet esse deum: ... " (604-610)

Thus it is inevitable that Bacchus' name reappears at the very end of the book, completing the sequence.

A problem arises over the lines 767 to 769. Several editors omit the line "quaerit Abantiades - quaerenti protinus unus" (Haupt-Ehwald and Magnus, for example) and Breitenbach offers the following text:

"quaerit Lyn^ccides; quaerenti protinus unus
narrat Abantiadae moresque animosque virorum"

Even in this version, however, Perseus is referred to by two different patronymics and a third one then appears at line 772 ("Agenorides"). Breitenbach suggests that "Lyncidae" should occur at line 768 instead of "Abantiadae" but "Abantiades" has already appeared at line 607 whereas "Lyncides" is a new title so the reverse seems more likely. The fact remains that Perseus is described by at least two different patronymics in a very few lines. . Ovid is perhaps making gentle mockery of the epic tendency to put great emphasis on ancestral heritage, a heritage which is often uncertain and varies according to the teller. For example, at M.13. 32 Ajax accuses Ulysses of being the son of Sisyphus but Ulysses rejects the suggestion and claims ancestry from Laertes (144), an altogether more respectable forebear.

The setting in which these references to Perseus' ancestors occur is certainly very Homeric, a hero recounting his exploits at a feast. Ovid chooses to use oratio obliqua for the narration, a fact which Due 78 calls "remarkable". As he points out, oratio obliqua was "characteristic of official style" and was most frequently adopted by historians, notably Caesar. Due continues:

"Here, the use of indirect speech reveals the conventionality of 'the hero's telling about himself at a banquet'. Ovid follows epic practice but slyly makes fun of it by choosing an incongruous medium: oratio obliqua".

The narration begins with an apparent error, the mention of Atlas as a mountain:

"narrat Agenorides gelido sub Atlante iacentem
esse locum solidae tutum munimine molis;" (772-3)

Atlas did not, of course, become a mountain until Perseus petrified him with Medusa's head so it is chronologically impossible for the Graiae to have lived beneath his slopes. The countryside around Medusa's dwelling place is then described in vivid detail. Her habitation seems to reflect her personal situation. The statues of her victims are evidence of her power even before Perseus encounters

her and there is a great sense of desolation. The emphasis is on rock and stone, both in the ground and in the form of the statues. The place is an isolated wilderness, remote from the rest of the world just as the Gorgon is separated from human society by her affliction. The countryside bristles with trees, recalling her head which bristles with snakes.

Medusa's death at Perseus' hands is passed over very briefly, although its violence is expressed in the use of "eripuisse" to describe her head being severed from her body. She is asleep when she is killed. Ovid describes how Perseus looks at her reflection in his shield when he beheads her, a trick which appears to be a fairly late development in the story. The only other similar detail seems to occur in Apollodorus. Pherecydes certainly does not mention it. As the Gorgon is asleep at the time, this trick causes some confusion about where her petrifying power lay. If the power was in her eyes, then Perseus need not have looked in his shield when she was asleep and her eyes closed. Moreover, it would, one imagines, have disappeared at her death. This seems to indicate that Ovid considered her power to lie in Medusa's face, not just in her eyes. There could also be a link between the notion of a reflected image in Perseus' shield and the fact that, according to Homer (Il.5.740), Athene had a representation of the Gorgon's head in the centre of her shield.

Another development of the Medusa legend which seems to appear first in Ovid is the actual reason for her punishment. Hesiod tells of her being beloved of Poseidon but does not make a direct link between this fact and her terrible fate. Again, it is possible that the story has been contaminated with the legend of Atalanta and Hippomenes, who make love in the temple of Cybele and are turned into lions for their impiety (M.10. 686ff.).

Medusa's fate is, of course, a prime example of divine justice in the Metamorphoses. She is raped ("vitiassse") by Neptune and, although she cannot be blamed for the god's behaviour, it is she who has to bear the wrath of the outraged Minerva¹⁶. However, Ovid does not actually attribute

the giving of the power of petrification to Minerva. He only mentions that she changes Medusa's beautiful hair into snakes:

"Gorgoneum crinem turpes mutavit in hydros." (801)

This despoiling of Medusa's most lovely attribute seems all the more petty and spiteful. The metamorphosis of the hair is the last in Book 4; the final word is "angues", emphasising the importance of the snake-motif throughout the book.

Book 4 ends with a happy scene, the wedding feast. However, the mood is abruptly changed in Book 5. The scene is the same but, as Phineus bursts into the hall to claim Andromeda, violence erupts. The fight which ensues is a bloody one, which Ovid chooses to describe in detail (though not as explicitly as the battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs in Book 12). Brooks Otis 163 regards the whole episode to be a "hollow pretence of epic", Ovid's attempt at an Aeneid, and a terrible failure. Due 78 considers that Otis is overstating his case. He appreciates some of the parodying humour of the tale and calls the cause of Otis' confusion "Ovidian ambiguity" (79).

Certainly there are several superficial similarities between this story and that of Aeneas. Perseus wins a princess from an old king, is challenged by a former suitor who believes right to be on his side and, after a struggle, overcomes his rival. There are many Virgilian echoes which could encourage such a comparison. Apart from the description of Atlas, there are obvious similarities between the declaration of intent by Phineus and Turnus:

"'en' ait, 'en adsum praereptae coniugis ultor.'" (M.5.10)

"... sunt et mea contra

fata mihi, ferro sceleratam exscindere gentem,

coniuge praerepta ... " (A.9. 136ff.)

Cepheus withdraws from the fight, just as Latinus does:

"... sed limine tecti

exierat Cepheus testatus iusque fidemque

hospitiique deos, ea se prohibente moveri." (M.5. 43ff.)

"abstinuit tactu pater aversusque refugit

foeda ministeria, et caecis se condidit umbris." (A.7. 618ff.)

Moreover, Cepheus' calling of the gods as witness to his feelings (M.5.44) is also echoed by Latinus:

"multa deos aurasque pater testatus inanis:" (A.7. 593)

Phineus pleads for his life in the same suppliant position as Turnus:

"... avertitur atque ita supplex
confessasque manus obliquaque bracchia tendens" (M.5. 214-5)

"ille humilis supplexque oculos dextramque precantem
protendens 'equidem merui, nec deprecor,' inquit". (A.12.930-1)

However, there are many equally important differences between the two poems. Due 78 explains:

"Perseus is not an Aeneas after all; he has no mission, his motives are love and revenge, and his behaviour towards his defeated foe is ostensibly un-Aenean. Nor is Phineus a Turnus; true, Turnus fights for his own sake, but nevertheless in the Aeneid his fight has the deep and tragic function of reflecting the fight between Italia and Roma."

Ovid is not attempting to emulate the Aeneid in this episode. His style and subject-matter are not compatible with true epic but deliberately incongruous. Incongruity and ambiguity are essential features of Ovid's style. Much of his humour is a product of deliberate incongruity. For example, when Salmacis first addresses Hermaphroditus by her pool, making the physical nature of her interest quite clear, her speech is an echo of Odysseus' address to Nausicaa (Odyssey 6. 149ff.):

"... puer o dignissime credi
esse deus, seu tu deus es, potes esse Cupido,
sive es mortalis, qui te genuere, beati,
et frater felix, et fortunata profecto,
si qua tibi soror est, et quae dedit ubera nutrix;
sed longe cunctis longeque beatior illa,
si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere taeda!" (M.4. 320ff.)

Her behaviour is, of course, quite inappropriate to a lady but the well-known origins of her proposition add greatly to the humour of this role-reversal. As to the question of ambiguity, in a poem whose declared theme is metamorphosis it is an essential quality. Due 79 notes;

"In dealing with the Metamorphoses it seems advisable to remember the truism that the unity of a poem is not made up by harmonies alone but also by dissonances."

The violence of the battle in Cepheus' palace has been described as an attempt to pander to popular taste (Due 76) or "only grotesque" (Otis 161). There may be some truth in the former view; certainly, Ovid's generation did not possess the same personal experience of war which had such an effect on Virgil and his contemporaries. However, both opinions seem to ignore the possibility of satire. The whole battle is an outrageous parody of Homeric epic, a more obvious example of a theme which is present throughout the Perseus story. The fight recalls in particular the struggle between Odysseus and the suitors in Book 22 of the Odyssey. Not only is the overall situation similar but the death scenes are often startlingly so.

Apart from the general imagery of heels drumming on the floor and faces or skulls being crushed, there are quite specific parallels. For example, when Antinous dies (Od.22. 15ff.) his blood spatters the food on the table. Similarly, when Rhoetus dies (M.5. 38ff.), he is also the first victim and his blood spoils the food. When Eurymachus is killed, he beats the earth with his forehead in his dying agony:

"... ὁ δὲ χθόνα τύπτει μετώπῳ
θυμῷ ἀνιάζων. ... " (Od.22. 86-7)

Eurytus does exactly the same:

"et resupinus humum moribundo vertice pulsat." (M.5. 84)

Athene is present in both versions to give aid to her chosen champion. A soothsayer dies in both, his head cut off (Od.22. 326ff. and M.5.146). Moreover, the image of the head still talking after death¹⁷ (Leiodes, Od. 22. 329) is taken up by Ovid and repeated elsewhere (Emathion, M.5. 105-106). The parallel between the Odyssey and Metamorphoses is, of course, by no means complete but, taking into consideration the humorous deflation of 'Perseus' heroic status in book 4 and such devices as the use of oratio obliqua in the narration of deeds at the feast, there seems to be sufficient evidence to prove that this episode is

indeed a parody.

An important aspect of parody is, of course, exaggeration and Ovid certainly describes some grotesque incidents during the battle. However, it could be argued that these scenes (for example, the death of Pelates, pinned to the door-post by one hand) are simply too extreme to be truly shocking. The audience is numbed by the amount of blood and brains, the number of heels drumming the floor in agony. Even so, one incident must surely stand out as genuinely horrible; the petrification of Phineus in the very act of pleading for his life.

Perseus has already vanquished his enemy in a welter of blood. Phineus stands before him beaten and humbled. Yet Perseus turns him to stone, a permanent reminder to Andromeda of the kind of man she might have married. The idea that one should take obvious and constant pleasure in the defeat and death of an enemy is most disturbing to modern sensibility. Moreover, the manner of Perseus' victory is not without its dubious side. He does not, as did Odysseus, prevail by force of arms but instead uses the Gorgon's head. The episode is reminiscent of Atlas' fate; Perseus realises that he cannot overcome his enemy by strength so uses his perhaps unfair advantage, a magic weapon. Note that Perseus is not standing along against Phineus and his men. Ovid specifically mentions a soldier on Perseus' side who is accidentally turned to stone;

"hic tamen ex merito poenas subiere, sed unus

miles erat Persei. ... "

(M.5.200-201)

Presumably Perseus had more than one soldier on his side so he cannot have been at a greater disadvantage than Odysseus, who only had three helpers. The comparison is not to Perseus' advantage.

Book 4 ended on a happy note with the marriage of Perseus and Andromeda. The effect would obviously have been spoiled if the Phineus episode had been included and this may be one reason why Ovid chooses to make the break between books where he does. Thus divided, the tone of the two sections is undoubtedly different; Book 5 has a harsher, less humorous note to it. Ovid could have made great play

of the death of Medusa in Book 4, for example, but instead of horror her death is even a positive aspect, with the creation of Chrysaor and Pegasus. This is certainly not true of the numerous deaths in Book 5.

The essential difference between these two sections seems to lie in Ovid's attitude towards Andromeda; her central importance is emphasised by the use of time in Book 4. Ovid begins the story with Medusa already dead and moves forward through time up to the rescue of Andromeda, then backwards from it. Thus Perseus' encounter with her seems to be at the centre, the climax of the tale. The notion of Andromeda as the culmination, the goal of Perseus' mission, is further emphasised by her consistently being described as "praemia" and "pretium".

Andromeda's rescue is the only feat of daring Perseus undertakes without resorting to the help of the Gorgon's head. In fact, when he actually kills the sea-monster he is entirely "human", without even the aid of his magic sandals. He undertakes the rescue of Andromeda purely out of love and marries her without any dowry. Due 79 considers the theme of this story to be love and vengeance but the Andromeda episode is one instance of love without vengeance, that is until Perseus defeats Phineus in Book 5.

Perseus' love for Andromeda is genuine, unlike the other kinds of love described in the story. Cassiope's love for her daughter, for example, is really egocentric; she sees Andromeda's beauty as a positive reflection of herself. Neptune's love for Medusa is, of course, no more than lust and, as a result, Medusa suffers a terrible punishment from Minerva. The Gorgon's story is very much a combination of love and revenge and her head serves as a kind of background symbol of these two motifs. Her presence is constant and threatening; even amid the happy scenes after Andromeda's rescue, the power of the head is emphasised by the coral passage.

The Gorgon's head is a great source of power and is bound to have an effect upon its wielder. This is the case with Perseus, who

becomes cruel in its use (as in the death of Phineus). In a sense he becomes more of an epic hero in Book 5. He fights Phineus not so much for Andromeda but for the sake of his own reputation¹⁸, which is not the case in the battle with the sea-monster. He causes great bloodshed in the Homeric struggle in Cepheus' palace. Note also that the scene eventually created there by Perseus, a room full of the statues of his victims, is remarkably similar to the landscape around the home of Medusa. He has proved no less deadly than she was.

The Perseus of Book 4 is not the same as the "hero" of Book 5. Ovid seems to be employing a two-angled technique to portray him, showing several aspects of his character at the same time. Perseus the man, Perseus the son of a god, Perseus the lover, Perseus the fighter; all are illustrated¹⁹. It is important to remember that Ovid does not confine himself to the description of physical metamorphoses in the poem. Spiritual and moral changes are also portrayed, often with equal power. For example, Tereus is changed from good husband to evil adulterer by forbidden passion (M.6. 424ff.). Even the gods are not immune. Venus undergoes a complete transformation when she falls in love with Adonis, taking up the pursuits of her opposite, Diana (M.10. 503ff.).

It could be argued, of course, that these are not true metamorphoses, particularly as Ovid himself often stresses that after a transformation "mens est eadem" (for example, in the case of Lycaon). One must also bear in mind the literal sense of μεταμορφώσεις (in nova mutatas formas corpora). Certainly, Venus' transformation is not permanent and perhaps Tereus was only in the grip of a temporary madness (or perhaps he was revealing his true character at last). It is quite reasonable to assume that Ovid simply changed his portrayal of Perseus to suit the situation; when he was parodying Homeric epic, Perseus became a parody of a Homeric hero and when he was writing a romance (the love affair between Perseus and Andromeda), then the character had to be altered to become a lover. Whatever the reason for such a treatment, the shifting image thus created adds to the ambiguity and sense of flux which pervades the poem.

NOTES

1. This is a good example of an aetiological myth, of which there are many throughout the poem. Ovid is, of course, following the example of Callimachus in inserting these aetiologies. Note the parallel in this respect between the Perseus story and that of Phaethon in Books 1 and 2 (M.1. 750ff.). Perseus infests Libya with snakes; Phaethon causes the skins of the Ethiopians to turn black. Perseus is instrumental in the creation of coral; Phaethon's death causes his sisters so much grief that they become trees and their tears amber. There are other parallels, of course: both stories are spread over two separate books; both young men are the sons of gods, out to prove themselves. Moreover, the girl whom Perseus rescues (Andromeda) is an Ethiopian. . cf. also the palaeontological reference in l. 423ff. (scientific explanation 430ff.).
2. According to Freud, snakes are erotic symbols in dreams:
"Many of the beasts which are used as genital symbols in mythology and folklore play the same part in dreams: e.g. fishes, snails, cats, mice (on account of the pubic hair), and above all those most important symbols of the male organ-snakes." (The Interpretation of Dreams translated by James Strachey { Pelican 1976} 474)
3. 117 "The snake was, of course, as an underground dweller and denizen of cemeteries, constantly associated with the dead and the powers of death."
142 "It was in the discussion of the dragoness (chapter vi) that sea and death first became prominent in this study. There I showed how remarkably alike are spirits of sea or water and spirits of death."
4. Fontenrose 473 "In general the hero/god champions the forces of creation, life, activity and order. For creation is an active, life-asserting process that gives shape and form to unordered material. Life requires order, which means putting a limit upon action in certain directions. But an order that resists all change and further creative activity denies life and turns into its opposite: it becomes a state of inactivity and death. The dragon enemy champions the forces of chaos, destruction inaction and death. For the kind of activity that turns solely to disorder and destruction destroys life along with order, and so returns to chaos and death. This is only to say that both life forces and death forces are necessary in a properly balanced individual and world".
5. There are numerous occasions in the Metamorphoses when this number (or nine, three times three) occurs, usually in a supernatural or magical setting e.g. M.10. 452f:
"ter pedis offensi signo est revocata, ter omen
funereus bubo letali carmine fecit. "

"hunc postquam sparsit Lethaei gramine suci
verbaque ter dixit placidos facientia somnos " (M.7. 152ff.)

" ... ad quae sua bracchia tendens
ter se convertit, ter sumptis flumine crinem
inroravit aquis terisque ululatibus ora
solvit ... " (M.7. 188ff)

" ... his fuis latices radice nocenti
spargit et obscurum verborum ambae novorum
ter noviens carmen magico demurmurat ore." (M.14. 56ff)

"ter iuvem baculo tetigit, tria carmina dixit." (M.14. 387)

It is also an epic motif, occurring frequently in Virgil and also in Homer e.g.

"ter sese attollens cubitoque adnixa levavit,
ter revoluta toro est oculisque errantibus alto
quaesivit caelo lucem ingenuitque reperta" (A.4. 690ff)

"atque hic Aenean magna ter voce vocavit." (A.10. 873)

"vix ea, cum lacrimas oculis Iuturna profudit
terque quaterque manu pectus percussit honestum." (A.12. 154f)

"τρισμάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις οἱ τότ' ὄλοντο
Τροίην ἐν εὐρείῃ, χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες." (Od. 5. 306f)

(cf. A.1. 94 " ... 'o terque quaterque beati.")

6. cf. Ovid M.4. 658ff.

"quantus erat, mons factus Atlas; nam barba comaeque
in silvas abeunt, iuga sunt umerique manusque,
quod caput ante fuit, summo est in monte cacumen,
ossa lapis fiunt; tum partes altus in omnes
crevit in inmensum (sic di statuistis), et omne
cum tot sideribus caelum requievit in illo."

Virgil A.4. 246ff.

" ... Iamque volans apicem et latera ardua cernit
Atlantis duri caelum qui vertice fulcit,
Atlantis, cinctum adsidue cui nubibus atris
piniferum caput et vento pulsatur et imbri,
nix umeros infusa tegit, tum flumina mento
praecipitant senis, et glacie riget horrida barba."

The image of the man-mountain also occurs at A.3. 577ff. (the legend of Enceladus trapped beneath Aetna), A.3.678 (the Cyclopes described as "Aetn^{ae}os fratres"), A.7.586 (Latinus likened to an ocean-cliff) and A.12.701ff. (Aeneas likened to Athos, Eryx and Apenninus). However, none of the above examples actually identify the being and the mountain as one and the same.

Callimachus (Hymn to Delos 137ff.) describes how Briareus lives beneath the mountain and causes volcanic eruptions when he moves. Moreover, in Hymn to Artemis (72-79), Brontes is actually portrayed as a man-mountain (see A.H.Griffiths "Six Passages in

- Callimachus and the Anthology" B.I.C.S.17 {1970} 34). Ovid also uses the man-mountain image when describing Tmolus (M.11. 150ff.). The mountain shakes the trees from his ears and takes a seat on his own mountain-side in order to judge the contest between Pan and Apollo.
7. Ovid is ambiguous here about whether Cassiope had boasted of her own or her daughter's beauty but at Amores 3.3. 17-18 he says the mother vaunted her own beauty, not that of Andromeda.
 8. Cf. Niobe M.6. 303ff.
 9. There is an obvious comparison to be made between Perseus' melting of Andromeda from stone to flesh and Pygmalion's vivification of his statue with the aid of Venus (the embodiment of love). The metaphor used in the Perseus story is presented literally in the Pygmalion episode.
 10. Cf. Tibullus 1. 1. 55
 "me retinet vinctum formosae vincla puellae".
 Tibullus 1.6. 37ff.
 "at mihi servandam credas: non saeva recuso
 verbera, detrecto non ego vincla pedum."
 Tibullus 2. 3. 79ff.
 "ducite: ad imperium dominae sulcabimus agros;
 non ego me vinclis verberibusque nego."
 Tibullus 2. 4. 1ff.
 "hic mihi servitium video dominamque paratam
 iam mihi, libertas illa paterna vale.
 servitium sed triste datur, teneorque catenis,
 et numquam misero vincla remittit Amor,"
 Ovid Amores 1 .2.20
 "porrigimus victas ad tua iura manus"
 Ovid Heroides 20. 85ff.
 "sed neque conpedibus nec me conpesce catenis -
 servabor firmo vinctus amore tui!"
 11. The simile of the Balearic sling also occurs in Book 2, when it is used to describe Mercury's passion for Herse:
 "obstipuit forma Iove natus et aethere pendens
 non secus exarsit, quam cum Balearica plumbum
 funda iacit: volat illud et incandescit eundo
 et, quos non habuit, sub nubibus invenit ignes" (726-729)
 As in the Perseus episode, the image is able to fulfil a double function. Although it is actually describing the sudden heat of Mercury's love, the effect is more wide-ranging. Mercury is flying through the air at the time so he can be likened to the swiftly-moving bullet which catches fire. Thus the audience is given an impression of the god's flight, his speed and the sudden strength of his ardour, all conveyed by one short reference. Another link with the Perseus episode is, of course, the fact that Perseus borrowed the winged sandals from Mercury and is wearing them when he is described this way.

12. For example, Narcissus falls in love with his own reflection:
 "dumque sitim sedare cupit, sitis altera crevit,
 dumque bibit, visae correptus imagine formae.
 spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse,
 quod unda est." (M.3. 415ff.)
 An interesting contrast to the sea-monster's mistake is that of Hermaphroditus. He dives into a pool of water, believing it to be safe and not realising that the pool and the nymph Salmacis are one. The result is, of course, terrible:
 "ergo ubi se liquidas, quo vir descenderat, undas
 semimarem fecisse videt mollitaque in illis
 membra, manus tendens, sed iam non voce virili
 Hermaphroditus ait ... " (M.4. 380ff.)
13. The winged sandals have also featured in another realistic (and amusing) incident earlier, when Perseus first sees Andromeda. Then he is so enthralled by her beauty that he almost forgets to flap his wings. (M.4. 676ff.)
14. This is a fine example of what Williams has described as "the kind of apparently gratuitous detail that Ovid relishes" (Liverpool Classical Monthly 5.5. 111-113, note on 3. 598). Such a love of detail is a feature shared, of course, by the Pre-Raphaelites. Cf. M.2. 735-6 (Mercury's rod)
 "ut teres in dextra, qua somnos ducit et arcet,
 virga sit ... "
 M.3. 874 (Europa on the bull's back)
 "... et dextra cornum tenet ... "
 M.2. 13ff. (description of Dæris' daughters)
 "... facies non omnibus una,
 non diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum."
 M.5. 601f. (Arethusa's flight from Alpheus)
 "sicut eram fugio sine vestibus (altera vestes
 ripa meas habuit): ... "
Ars Amatoria 2. 131 (Odysseus on the beach)
 "ille levi virga (virgam nam forte tenebat) "
15. Amongst the numerous interpretations of the Apollo-Daphne episode offered by the Ovide Moralise (1.3065-74) is just such a "scientific" explanation which may well be a product of the Stoic allegorizing method: Daphne's father, the river Peneus, represents moisture; Apollo, as the sun, represents warmth; when the two are conjoined, the laurel tree (Daphne) results.
16. There are numerous examples of innocent girls having to suffer such double punishments throughout the Metamorphoses. The maidens who encounter Jupiter are particularly unlucky; Juno is an especially jealous and vindictive wife. See, for example, the stories of Io (M.1.588ff.), Callisto (M.2.409ff.), Semele (M.3. 259ff.).
17. Cf. also the severed head of Medusa, still potent.

18. This is, of course, good epic behaviour. Achilles, for example, makes his motives for fighting quite clear at Il. 9.308-429 and they are solely concerned with achieving lasting fame for himself.
- ✓ 19. cf. Ovid's treatment of Medea in Book 7. The girl who has sufficient moral scruples to have resolved not to help Jason until she sees him again in the grove (72ff.) hardly seems to be the same person as the woman who murders Pelias in cold blood (297ff.) and plots against Theseus (404ff.). cf. Apollonius' treatment of her as a victim of Eros (3. 248ff.). See also her speech to Jason (4. 355ff.)

The Perseus Cycle of Sir Edward Burne-Jones

The sequence of pictures to which I shall be referring, unless otherwise stated, is the collection of studies housed in Southampton Art Gallery.¹ This is the most complete sequence of the Perseus theme and gives the best indication of Burne-Jones' intentions. The pictures were meant to be completed as oil paintings but this project was later abandoned.² Great numbers of studies and variations upon the pictures exist, as well as many preliminary sketches, a comprehensive catalogue of which has been compiled by Kurt Löcher in his book Der Perseus-Zyklus von Edward Burne-Jones, Stuttgart 1973.

Burne-Jones spent some twenty years working on this story in one form or another and apparently intended to illustrate it from beginning to end. Two versions of "Danaë and the Tower" exist independently of this cycle and, perhaps more interestingly, so do the preliminary sketches for a "Court of Phineus".³ According to the painter's own Notebook (1070², pages 77v, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum) he also intended to portray the deaths of Polydectes and Acrisius, Perseus as King, and the placing of the Gorgon's head on Minerva's aegis.⁴ It seems, however, that these pictures were later abandoned.

The story of Perseus appears to have had a particular fascination for Burne-Jones. The cycle of paintings was commissioned by Arthur Balfour to decorate the music room of his house in Carlton Gardens but he left the choice of subject to the artist. It was an exciting and innovative project. Burne-Jones wanted the paintings to become part of the room and intended originally that they should actually be set into the plaster of the walls, with a plaster frieze of leaves around each one. He experimented with different materials and techniques, including gesso-relief. For example, in one version of "Perseus and the Graiae", now owned by the Earl of Balfour, he used wood to create the striated landscape.

Although the project was never completed, the full-sized studies

at Southampton constitute a genuine series and in the case of "Perseus about to sever the head of Medusa" for example, the unfinished nature of the work actually gives it a power which might not have been present in a completed version. It is particularly important to remember that, given a free choice, Burne-Jones selected this legend for illustration. What was his special interest in it? Fitzgerald 160 explains that the legend encapsulated his favourite themes, "seeking and finding, rescue, waiting, reflections"; this phrase should be borne in mind in any discussion of the paintings.

The series is generally accepted as an illustration of the Earthly Paradise of William Morris, specifically of "The Doom of King Acrisius". However, before any comparison can be made between the two (or with Ovid, as a possible source) the pictures themselves must be examined to assess Burne-Jones' intentions in painting them.

Burne-Jones was a painter of beauty and atmosphere. Indeed he has been criticised for the languor, the enervating quality of his work, the sadness which pervades his paintings and the similarity of faces and bodies⁵. Yet what are faults to some are virtues to others. His pictures are extremely seductive in their beauty and stillness. Whether they are considered charming or(perhaps disturbingly) sensual depends upon the sensibilities of the spectator⁶.

Burne-Jones was undoubtedly, by nature, melancholic; he possessed a strange inner sadness which never left him throughout his life. He was born in Birmingham, son of a picture-framer and he never knew his mother (she died just after his birth). His whole childhood is marked by his hunger for beauty, a quality sadly lacking in his industrial home town. He dearly loved his father and Miss Sampson, the housekeeper who looked after him, but he felt that they did not understand him at all. He was very lonely and found the beauty he sought in books, in ancient tales of heroism and romance.

This characteristic of sad dissatisfaction manifests itself clearly in his work. Sir Sidney Colvin, who knew him well, wrote

about this very quality of his painting in Memories and Notes of Persons and Places (London 1921) 52-53: :

"And is the world we live in, and is the heart of man, so made that in the depths of any great man's there is not likely to reside an instinct of yearning and craving, not likely to be harboured a passion of unsatisfied spiritual quest and hunger? Such a strain of innermost, still hankering soul-hunger, such a vital habit of the being, truly lay deep in Burne-Jones's nature and could not help expressing itself in his work."

Colvin goes on to emphasize, however, that Burne-Jones never inflicted this melancholy upon others and was always very sociable and jolly.

Such a temperament would naturally incline Burne-Jones towards stories of quests and searches for the unattainable; he was himself in a constant state of yearning. Moreover, he had a romantic imagination and was much attracted by tales of love. The combination, a story of a quest for fulfilment through love, provided him with the main theme of his work, both in Christian and pagan contexts.

Associated with this sense of sadness is his great interest in characters who cannot escape a destiny imposed upon them. His characters often have an air of resignation about them and appear to be simply acting out a part without hope of affecting things; this quality reflects his own fatalism. He yearned after something "beyond", yet could not reach it. Burne-Jones seems to have considered it the lot of mankind to be forever striving but doomed, more often than not, to failure. This tendency is well described by Penelope Fitzgerald when she is discussing the painter's love of Chaucer. She says (34):

"He understood perfectly Criseyde's remark that we are wretched if we despair of happiness, but fools if we expect it; he responded to what was wistful, dry and ironic in Chaucer, and also to his occasional lapses into total sentimentality".

With such a disposition it is inevitable that he should find

much of his material in the ancient mythologies of Greece, Rome and the East. He had an extensive knowledge of Greek and Latin literature⁷ which he read with much pleasure throughout his life. All those who knew him well are at pains to stress this knowledge. John Ruskin, an intimate friend⁸, discusses this aspect of the painter's work in "Mythic Schools of Painting"(47):

"It is impossible for the general public to estimate the quantity and investigatory reading, and the fine tact of literary discrimination, which are signified by the command now possessed by Mr. Burne-Jones over the entire range both of Northern and Greek mythology, or of the tenderness at once and largeness of sympathy which have enabled him to harmonise these with the loveliest traditions of Christian legend."

Burne-Jones chose the story of Perseus specially for the Balfour commission and it is easy to see its strong appeal for him; it contained a quest, love interest and a sense of fate, that is "Seeking and finding, rescue, waiting reflections". He is reported to have declared his intentions as a painter thus: "I don't want to copy objects - I want to show people something". (Fitzgerald 36) What, then, is the "something" he shows us in the Perseus cycle?

The series contains ten pictures as follows:

1. The Arming of Perseus
2. Perseus and the Graiae
3. Perseus in the Garden of the Nymphs
4. Perseus about to sever the head of Medusa
5. The Birth of Pegasus and Chrysaor from the blood of Medusa
6. The Escape of Perseus
7. Atlas turned to stone
8. The Rescue of Andromeda
9. Perseus Slaying the Serpent
10. Perseus and his Bride

Some of these are highly worked (for example, the last study), others are still rough sketches (especially the death of Medusa).

Burne-Jones was amazingly thorough in his preparations. He had models of pieces of armour specially made and filled sketch-books with studies of helmets, sandals, wings and, of course, nude figures. He was also meticulous about the materials he used and would never employ a colour, the stability of which was in question. His son Philip explains that this often caused him grief, in his article "Notes on some unfinished Works of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bt.": -

"He would often lament the comparatively limited palette which this restriction implied, and, among colours tabooed, he especially regretted Indian Lake and Dragon's Blood".

Burne-Jones' research for this particular series also took him to the British Museum to study the Greek vase-paintings there. He wrote down a list of vases⁹ in one of his Notebooks (now in Wightwick Manor) and obviously used some of them to aid him in the composition of his works¹⁰. He was especially interested to see how Medusa had been portrayed. Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones reports his own comment in her Memorials Vol. I, 59:

"I have worked at the British Museum lately looking up all the most ancient ways of portraying Medusa, and they are very few but very interesting..."

Lady Burne-Jones also tells us that the Andromeda pictures were finished first.

The Arming of Perseus

This picture shows Perseus' encounter with Athene. It combines in fact, two scenes in one because on the left and slightly in the background we see Athene, disguised as an old woman, approaching Perseus while in the foreground on the right the hero receives his instruction from her. She has thrown off her disguise and wears a strange costume of drapery and armour, while Perseus is naked. Burne-Jones was not concerned to reproduce details such as the correct dress with antiquarian accuracy. Indeed, he was very careful to be inaccurate in his historical presentation because he did not want his paintings to be located definitely in any specific time period. He wanted them to be ageless, existing in a world of their own, so that

they could have a significance for all time. He often designed pieces of armour himself so that they could not be associated with any particular historical period and he observed the same rule with hair-styles, clothes, buildings and landscapes. His techniques are effective: John Dixon Hunt in his essay "A Moment's Monument" is moved to exclaim

"The timelessness of myth is most remarkable in Burne-Jones,"

In the background we glimpse the outline of a city, there are vague tree-shapes around and a stream runs glassily through what might be sand-dunes or hillocks of some kind. The vagueness of the background contrasts strongly with the perfect detail of Athene's drapery and Perseus' bare feet and hands. The figures possess a reality which emphasises the swirling dream-world in which they are set. Perseus holds his hand to his forehead, perhaps in amazement or to shield his eyes from the goddess's presence. Both faces have the expression of wistful longing associated with Burne-Jones' work and their gazes seem not quite to meet (another characteristic of Burne-Jones' paintings).

Athene is carrying the sword which will kill Medusa in her right hand¹¹ and in her left (gesturing out of the picture) she holds a mirror. This is, apparently, a literal interpretation of the part of the legend which says Perseus studied Medusa's reflection before cutting off her head. It is interesting to speculate why Burne-Jones should show a real mirror, an object which appears frequently in his paintings. The mirror was an important symbol in Medieval and Renaissance art, periods with which Burne-Jones was intimately acquainted. It represented a variety of qualities from Prudence (self-knowledge) to Vanity and Lust (associated with the allegorical Mirror of Venus, incidentally the subject of another Burne-Jones painting). In religious art the mirror belonged to the Virgin Mary (for the symbolism of the mirror in art, see Ripa Iconographia Amsterdam 1698 and Hall Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art London 1974). It seems possible that to Burne-Jones it represented some kind of Truth, of self-awareness; on the other hand, it could be

that with his interest in creating "other worlds" he was fascinated by the mirror's capacity to create a replica of the real world that was yet unreal. Whatever the reason for its inclusion, by following Athene's gesture with her mirror we are led firmly into the next painting in the sequence.

Perseus and the Graiae

The most instantly striking aspect of this work is its Latin inscription, beautifully executed in gold at the top of the painting. The whole study is composed so that the inscription becomes an integral part of the picture and there is a pleasing visual pun in the way in which Perseus stoops to seize the eye; it is almost as though he were stooping under the inscription. The Latin was composed by Sir Richard Claverhouse Jebb, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge¹², and it summarises the subject-matter of the cycle. It is interesting that the petrification of Phineus and his men is clearly mentioned. Obviously the concept of this picture was not abandoned until much later.

The inscription reads:

PERSEA . CONSILIO . PALLAS . MOVET . INSTRUIT . ARMIS .
LUMINE . PRIVATAE . MONSTRANT . PENETRALIA . GRAIAE .
NYMPHARUM . HINC . ALES . PLANTAS . CAPUT . OBDITUS . UMBRIS .
GORGONA . MORTALEM . DE . NON . MORTALIBUS . UNAM .
ENSE . FERIT . GEMINAE . SURGUNT . URGUNT . QUE . SORORES .
SAXEUS . EN . ATLAS . CAESO . QUE . EREPTA . DRACONE .
ANDROMEDA . ET . COMITES . IAM . SAXEA . CORPORA . PHINEI .
EN . VIRGO . HORRENDAM . IN . SPECULO . MIRATA . MEDUSAM .

Medusa is not mentioned by name until the very last word, a particularly emphatic position. Similarly, the subject of the cycle of paintings (and the Latin) is introduced in the very first word, "PERSEA". The whole inscription occupies nearly one half of the picture.

Beneath this swirls a strange elemental landscape, executed in muted tones of brown and grey. The sky is streaked and banded in the same way as the ground. These striations are echoed in the

detailed intricacies of the draping of the women's clothes, making them seem very much part of the landscape. The smoothness of Perseus' armour forms a strong contrast. The presence of these layers of rock and their bareness create an atmosphere of great age, so great that it cannot be measured. This could be the beginning or the end of time; it is beyond time. The absence of landmarks of any kind means that this place cannot be located in any one particular part of the world. There seems to be neither heat nor cold, although the bleakness is suggestive of great cold.

The three figures of the women are crouched in a position which recalls Shakespeare's three witches in Macbeth. Each of them reaches out a hand to another in a kind of forward circular motion but Perseus has captured the eye and holds it carefully between finger and thumb.

The way in which Burne-Jones has chosen to portray the Graiae is most unusual. Legend leads one to expect them to be very old, haggard and grey-haired (their name, of course, meaning the Grey Ones). Yet, although those women are perhaps not as shapely as some he depicted, Burne-Jones paints them with smooth skins, clear features and no grey hair (although one figure could be said to have a few streaks of grey). It was against his inmost nature to paint women as anything but young and beautiful and it appears that even when his subject required him to do so, he could not¹³. Thus, his Graiae are smooth-skinned and Burne-Jones transfers the idea of age to the background instead: the lines and wrinkles one might expect on the faces of the women appear on the face of the earth around them.

This use of background to create atmosphere in a painting¹⁴ has little to do with the Pre-Raphaelite philosophy of "showing Nature as it really is"¹⁵. Burne-Jones, a "second generation" Pre-Raphaelite, never attempted the social realism of, for example, Ford Madox Brown¹⁶. He painted things realistically and in detail but the subjects of his work might be totally imaginary - a fascinating paradox. The swirls and curves of the landscape are echoed in the circular arrangement of the figures. Once again, by following the

line of the arms, the eye is led into the next study.

Perseus in the Garden of the Nymphs

This picture is perhaps the most dream-like of the series. The wistful beauty of the three maidens (their classical pose so reminiscent of the Three Graces¹⁷) and the sweeping background gives it the quality of a vision, a scene in the mind's eye only. Paul Leprieur describes it as "*l'incarnation la plus délicieuse de créatures de rêve*". Each Nymph carries a gift for Perseus to aid him in his quest; the helmet of Hades, the winged sandals and the kibisis. Perseus has already received one of the sandals and is tying it on as he sits on a rock. As is usual in a Burne-Jones painting, the gazes of the figures do not seem quite to meet.

From surviving preliminary studies now housed in the Staatsgalerie (see Löcher illustrations 41, 42) we know that Burne-Jones experimented with the positioning of the sets of figures before finally placing Perseus on the left and the Nymphs on the right. This is the more pleasing arrangement as, by following the line of Perseus' gaze and the arm of the foremost Nymph, the eye of the spectator is skilfully directed to the next picture. The smoothness with which this transition is achieved throughout the sequence is impressive and, of course, is essential if a true sense of an unfolding story is to be attained¹⁸.

Burne-Jones' love of reflections is present even in this study. The beautifully detailed feet of the Nymphs are mirrored in the pool of sea-water they are standing on (not in). The vagueness of the background not only allows the spectator to place the scene anywhere he wishes in his own imagination but also throws the finely-detailed figures into relief and encourages the eye to notice minute details which might otherwise be missed. These pictures are, of course, unfinished but the style of background is the same in the completed works. Burne-Jones himself remarks on the importance of this with reference to "The Rock of Doom" ("The Rescue of Andromeda") recorded in G.B.J. Vol. 2, 68 f:

"I have worked solely at Andromeda and at last it begins

to look what I wanted it to be - but all the sick weeks I worked at it when I ought to have done nothing nearly ruined it. You see I began to play with it and filled it with little houses and fields and roads, and walled gardens and mills, and bushes and winding shores and islands, and one day the veil was lifted and I saw how every pretty incident helped to ruin the thing, and I had three days of havoc at it and took them all out."

In this picture, lack of detailed background allows us to notice more rapidly the shell on the bodice of one Nymph's dress, for example. This shell is a scallop like the one from which Botticelli's Venus rises and there is no doubt that the Italian artist's influence can be seen in the picture as a whole. Similarly, the figure of Perseus seems to derive from an *ignudo* on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. The whole effect is one of dream-like beauty, a quiet vision which is in startling contrast to the next painting in the sequence. This also features three females but they are of a very different type.

Perseus about to sever the head of Medusa

This picture is full of violence and horror, characteristics emphasized by the fact that it is in its first stages and in monochrome. Burne-Jones has chosen to interpret the Gorgons, particularly Medusa, not as hideous but as terrible, terrible in their beauty in the same way that the gods were considered terrible. Medusa was, of course, the only mortal Gorgon and she alone seems to have no wings, although this is contrary to the ancient vase-paintings Burne-Jones studied in the British Museum (we know from his notebook that he studied Vase 641 which clearly shows Medusa as possessing four wings). Her two sisters are crouched beneath their wings in attitudes of fear.

It is strange that Leprieur says that Perseus surprises the three half-asleep: they seem very much awake. Medusa is standing and her sisters' eyes are wide with fright. In fact, their expressions are a direct contrast to that of Medusa; she seems very calm and there even appears to be a trace of a smile about her mouth. She is swathed

in black drapes while her sisters are naked and her snaky hair is merely hinted at by its movement. Her face is highlighted, white against the black of her clothes. Perseus, too, is naked as yet but he wears the helmet of invisibility, carries the sword and is looking into the mirror in his left hand.

The background is indeterminate; preliminary sketches (see Lûcher illustrations 54, 55) suggest pillars were to be added but the actual shapes in this picture seem far more like rocks. This is only the roughest of cartoons by Burne-Jones' standards and there is obviously much work still to be done; for example, Perseus would be given his armour and perhaps the two sisters would be draped like Medusa. However, the artist's aims in composition and the creation of atmosphere are clear. This is a picture to shudder at, particularly set as it is amidst the beauty of the other works. The smooth transition from painting to painting is maintained here; the spectator's eye follows the gaze of Perseus and the two crouching Gorgons into the next scene.

The birth of Pegasus and Chrysaor from the blood of Medusa

This is an extremely formal composition in beautifully-modulated tones of pink and grey. The imposing figure of Pegasus is perfectly detailed yet seems deliberately lifeless, like a statue. In fact, it seems likely that a carving was indeed the inspiration for this horse. Burne-Jones studied the terracottas in the British Museum and one relief in particular, showing Paris in a chariot drawn by four horses, seems to have influenced him. Pegasus is an almost exact replica of the foremost horse in Paris' team. Burne-Jones has even reproduced the carved mane and the vacant orbs (instead of eyes) of the original. Chrysaor, being newly born, is far smaller than either Perseus or Medusa. There is a practical consideration also; if Chrysaor were the same size as the other figures, the composition would be overcrowded.

The formal nature of the study is maintained in the figure of Medusa, headless but not completely prone. The arrangement of her arms and hands and the whiteness of her entire figure creates a statue-

like effect, complementing the sculpted figure of the horse. It is ironic that Medusa, petrifier of men, should be portrayed as a statue in death. Her head, eyes closed, seems small in Perseus' left hand. In his right is the sword, still in a downward sweeping position after the severing of the head. For once Burne-Jones seems to have given some expression to one of his faces - Perseus frowns in a rather fierce fashion as he looks at the headless corpse.

A few snakes, either fallen from the head or created from drops of blood, writhe at Perseus' feet; they are more realistic than the ones still attached to the head, which seem shorter and straighter. In fact, the image of the snake-hair on Medusa's head is almost repeated in Pegasus' tail; both move in the same directions and the "locks" of hair in the horse's tail reflect the snakes on the Gorgon's head. Thus one side of the composition balances the other. Symmetry and proportion are also emphasised in the background, a pinkish square in the centre of the picture. The figures all seem carefully placed in relation to this, as is the rock at the bottom of the picture which peaks below its centre.

Burne-Jones also uses colour to create harmony and give the painting a sense of unity. There are only two different colours used; all the others are really tones of these basic hues. The strongest areas of colour are concentrated in Pegasus' wings, Perseus' armour and the rock. It is interesting that the horse's wings are painted a strong red (strong, that is, for a Burne-Jones painting). Perhaps this colour is meant to reflect the origin of the creature, born of blood. The formality of the composition is further emphasised by the naming of Pegasus, Chrysaor and Medusa in the same script used for the inscription of "Perseus and the Graiae", another example perhaps of the influence of the terracotta relief. In using the terracotta as an inspiration, Burne-Jones has reflected its static, formal beauty and created a work of literary learning and erudition. Löcher 28, however, feels that as a result the picture is "erdacht, kalt und schwinglos", a harsh judgment. Even in this picture there is some sense of movement. By following the line of Perseus' swinging arms

and the direction in which Pegasus is facing, one is led on to the next study.

The Escape of Perseus

The background, so vague as to be unrecognisable in "Perseus about to sever the head of Medusa" is now quite clearly one of rocks and a pool of water, probably sea. Medusa is slumped in the foreground with her back now to the spectator. The drapes she was wearing in the previous pictures are not painted in and she is naked. On the left of the picture her two sisters fly in a circle, confused and horrified but unable to see Perseus because of the magic helmet. They also are naked. On the right of the painting Perseus is escaping, at the same time placing the severed head in his kibisis.

The positioning of the figures in this study is worth particular mention. The figure of the Gorgon on the far left is counterbalanced by Perseus on the right. The second Gorgon, her back to the spectator, is in the centre. In the space beneath Perseus' feet is the figure of the fallen Medusa, the curve of her leg and shoulder repeated in the positioning of the second Gorgon and Perseus above her. This arrangement is definitely more pleasing than the other which, according to a working sketch (Löcher illustration 71), Burne-Jones also considered using. In this sketch Medusa is placed between the two Gorgons, who are standing on the ground. Perseus is still escaping to the right. Although this is also a well-proportioned arrangement, it is more diffuse and lacks the dramatic tension of the full-sized study.

Drama is also created by the artist's use of black and white contrast; the black wings of the flying Gorgons against the white pallor of their flesh. As is quite usual with Burne-Jones, the numbers of colours is kept to a minimum but white is used to highlight different areas of the painting; for example, the feathers on Perseus' shoulders and the dead face of Medusa. A swirl of white is also used behind the upper torso of Perseus, throwing it into relief.

A closer examination of the figures reveals the masculinity of

the females, or, at least, of the two flying Gorgons. The muscles in the legs and bottom of the second sister are most impressive but hardly feminine, especially if compared with the back view of Andromeda in "Perseus slaying the Serpent", for example; Andromeda's bottom has, in fact, inspired one critic to describe it as "delicately glorious... like a pale peach at sunrise" (Timothy Hilton The Pre-Raphaelites [London 1970] 200) but the same could hardly be said of the Gorgons'. Perhaps Burne-Jones saw this combination of masculine and feminine (the face of the first Gorgon is definitely female and she has breasts) as part of their "monstrosity". In any case, the figure of the fallen, mortal Medusa, from what can be seen, is obviously feminine.

We know from sketchbooks and notes (Löcher 103) that Burne-Jones spent a great deal of time in research and making sketches for the wings of the two sisters. They are certainly very striking in size and colour, recalling the Furies or perhaps the Harpies. They are not the wings of pleasant creatures such as angels. Being black, they seem to cast a sense of doom and horror over the whole painting. However, Perseus seems untouched by the danger and horror around him. His eyes are fixed somewhere in the middle distance and no emotion is obvious on his face.

The sex of the owner of such a face as Perseus' is also difficult to determine and many criticisms have in the past been levelled at Burne-Jones for the androgynous nature of his characters. It seems disturbing to some that they cannot always instantly recognise faces as male or female. There are two explanations for this aspect of Burne-Jones' style. Firstly, he was greatly influenced by the Italian painters of the Renaissance, whose boys often look girlish. Secondly, and more importantly, Burne-Jones did not want to paint individual characters. His faces are deliberately expressionless and even sexless because in that way he felt they could possess universal meaning. He claimed that he modelled this feature upon the sculptures of the Ancient Greeks. David Cecil, Visionary and Dreamer (London 1969) 192 quotes Burne-Jones on this subject:

"The moment you give what people call expression ... you destroy the typical character of heads and degrade them

into portraits which stand for nothing".

Burne-Jones felt strongly that it was not enough simply to reproduce the real world. Art should take the viewer into a different world, beyond time and the ordinary forces of nature; "I don't want to copy objects; I want to show people something". The movement to the right which has been present in all the pictures so far is also present here as Perseus escapes, as it were, into the next scene.

Atlas turned to stone

This scene was originally intended to be portrayed in relief, like "Perseus and the Graiae", but the design was never executed. The existing study is remarkable for its quality of light and space as well as for the beautifully drawn figure of Atlas himself. The giant, with his prominent muscles and suffering face, is strongly reminiscent of William Blake's, as Lücher 28 notes. Note also his paleness, presumably due to the fact that he has been turned to stone. However, even allowing for the effect of petrification, he does not appear to have been the dark and terrible figure described by William Morris in "The Dream of Acrisius".

Burne-Jones has chosen to interpret the legend literally; Atlas is said to have taken the heavens on his shoulders and we are shown a pictorial representation of exactly that. The stars are depicted as figures, the signs of the Zodiac which they represent. Aquarius, Sagittarius, Virgo, Leo and Cancer are all clearly visible on the globe supported by Atlas. The giant stares reproachfully after the disappearing figure of Perseus but his extraordinary burden does not seem to be causing him strain; he is not bowed beneath it. Perseus glances back over his shoulder at his victim as he departs and is obviously in the act of replacing his weapon, Medusa's head, in the kibisis. He naturally averts his own gaze from her stony stare. His figure is strongly highlighted with white on the armour and kibisis, making it harsh on the eye in comparison with the soft luminescence of Atlas.

The change of position of the wings on Perseus' right foot is interesting. Burne-Jones never filled in the gap, so we can see clearly what the original position had been. The change is an improvement. It is less clumsy and creates a more symmetrical and realistic arrangement. One would expect the sets of wings to flap more or less in unison, a fact overlooked in the original design. It is typical of Burne-Jones to take this amount of care over such relatively unimportant details.

Both Atlas and Perseus seem to be in a canyon. Bare mountainsides slope up on either side of the picture but there is little detail apart from the rock on which Atlas stands. The sky is painted with a technique very similar to that in "Perseus and the Graiae". However, the colours used are quite different and there is a great feeling of light and space which gradually gives way to the darker bands at the top of the painting. Burne-Jones was, presumably, trying to capture the sense of a sunrise or sunset (Atlas lived in the area of the Hesperides, the land of the setting sun, but Perseus took his leave of the giant in the morning according to Morris, so it could be either). Our eyes are drawn by the fleeing Perseus out of this study and into the next.

The Rescue of Andromeda

The deliverance of Andromeda is described in two pictures although originally Burne-Jones tried to combine both scenes into one¹⁹. Both were completed and exhibited, unlike most of the studies. The story of Perseus' rescue of Andromeda is the second of what Leprieur calls "*les deux instants décisifs du drame*" (the other being the death of Medusa).

In "The Rescue of Andromeda", Perseus is introducing himself to his lady love as she stands naked, chained to a jutting rock. Her eyes are modestly downcast and Perseus appears to be doffing his cap to her. The movement, taken by Leprieur to be an act of gallantry ("*un geste charmant de galanterie naïve*"), becomes less ridiculous when one remembers that the cap makes Perseus invisible. This fact

also explains the effect of a dissipating nimbus around his head. He can, in fact, only appear to Andromeda by taking the cap off and the nimbus conveys his return to the visible state. About his feet the sea churns and in the background there are sea-gulls flying. In the distance can be seen the outline of a city, stretching along the cliff-top; presumably this is Joppa. Despite the movement of the sea, the picture has an air of gentleness and charm. The colours are extremely subdued and the two figures are frozen in the moment of their first encounter.

Burne-Jones was obviously influenced in the composition of this study (and the next) by the Sala di Andromeda in the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome²⁰. The rocks and Andromeda's pose both bear a close resemblance to those in the fresco. Moreover, Perino del Vaga kept the scenes of the meeting and the fight with the monster separate. However, Burne-Jones has created in both his pictures an atmosphere quite different from the Italian painter's.

The misty, colourless background forces the two well-defined figures even further forward. There is a stark contrast between the steely blue of Perseus' garb and the soft whiteness of Andromeda's naked body. The interval between Perseus and Andromeda, with the tall rock between them, is perfectly gauged (the ability to place figures in exactly the right relation to each other was one of Burne-Jones' greatest talents). Perseus' stance is also rather interesting. His hand, outstretched, rests on the rock to which Andromeda is chained and his head is slightly drawn back as if surprised - or perhaps he is appraising the lovely maiden before him. The painter is expressing a movement just past and yet at the same time maintains the feeling of a frozen moment in time.

The sense of a historical past in a picture was, of course, a particular trait of the Pre-Raphaelites. They felt it was very important to suggest something had just happened and also that something was about to happen. The dramatic tension consisted in the fact that the spectator could only guess, could only interpret what he saw in a

personal way. There is an interesting discussion of this aspect of Pre-Raphaelite painting in Margaret Gent's article "To Flinch from Modern Varnish" (she takes as her example "The Hireling Shepherd" by Holman Hunt)²¹. Although his approach is often simplistic, Leprieur is correct when he summarises this scene as "tout intime et tendre"; it is the moment of first love.

The sense of being stopped in time is further emphasised by the fact that, unlike all the previous works, there is no movement into the next picture. Perseus and Andromeda are wholly absorbed in each other. Burne-Jones seems to have seen Andromeda as a kind of goal to which Perseus aspired, a reward for his heroism; this is emphasised by the cessation of movement in the paintings when Perseus encounters her. All the previous events lead up to this meeting and the story culminates in it. After this break in the narrative, the tale continues as Perseus fights the sea-snake and makes certain of his bride.

Perseus slaying the Serpent

In this painting, the spectator is given a beautiful rear view of Andromeda as she watches her suitor do battle for her. Perseus has struck off her chains which hang broken against the rock and it must be admitted that she looks extremely relaxed, despite her perilous situation. The figure of Andromeda (and indeed Perseus) is noticeably better defined than in the preceding picture. In fact, the whole tone of this scene is different; the outlines are sharper and the colours harder than in "The rescue of Andromeda". This is, of course, quite compatible with the subject-matter of each study. The meeting of the lovers, despite its unfortunate setting, is obviously a more romantic moment than the battle with the sea-snake. A violent scene requires a more powerful treatment and Perseus' determination to win is reflected in the strength of line and colour. His expression, with the dark smudges round the eyes and set mouth, is similarly harsh.

The snake has coiled itself round Perseus many times, creating a striking image. Löcher 40 sees a similarity between this image and a Celtic-Irish initial. It is well-known that Burne-Jones was

fascinated by the Celtic tradition so it is possible that he was influenced in this way²². However, Löcher's description of the rock to which Andromeda is chained as a "Celtic" menhir is far less convincing; much more significant is the startling similarity between this rock and the one depicted in the Sala di Andromeda already noted. The figures of Andromeda, Perseus and the snake fill most of the picture. The small amount of background is filled with well-defined rocks which seem to create an enclosed arena in which the struggle takes place. This also increases the spectator's concentration upon, in particular, the battling hero and the monster.

If we re-examine Mrs. Fitzgerald's phrase "seeking and finding, rescue, waiting, reflections", we see that Perseus has been seeking throughout his previous adventures. At first he sought and found Medusa but this was only the beginning of his journey. He continued and found Andromeda, who was awaiting rescue (as was Medusa, perhaps; rescue from her curse). The two stories, Andromeda and Medusa, are reflections of one another. Through his treatment of the Andromeda scenes, Burne-Jones shows that this is the true end of Perseus' search. Until this adventure the narrative has been smooth, each scene leading into the next. Suddenly the story stops when Perseus first sees the bashful Andromeda. The spectator's attention is focused in a most dramatic way upon the fight to rescue her. This is the moment of redemption; if Perseus wins, he redeems Andromeda, her people and himself.

The idea of redemption through love of a woman (not Christian salvation) was, of course, a basic theme in the chivalric code of medieval knights and was expressed frequently by two of Burne-Jones' favourite authors, Chaucer and Malory. It is quite possible, therefore, that the artist interpreted the legend in the light of this theme. The obvious parallels between the legends of the pagan Perseus and the Christian St. George strengthen such an argument.

Perseus and his Bride

This is the last scene of this series (though not, as has been

noted, the last scene conceived by the painter, which was the "Court of Phineus"). It is a particularly richly coloured painting and it is perhaps worth remembering that John Ruskin, Burne-Jones' mentor, believed strong colours to symbolise powerful emotions. It would be a delightful notion if the vivid colours were meant to be a symbol of the great strength of love between Perseus and Andromeda.

The painting, a strange and haunting work, is full of evocative details and potential allusions. The two lovers are standing in an enclosed garden, next to a spreading apple tree. They are both gazing into a pool of water, contained in what looks more like a font than a well. Their hands are clasped and Perseus is holding up the head of Medusa so that they can gaze on her reflection safely. Both figures are clothed, Perseus in his strange armour and Andromeda in a blue gown and a surprisingly vivid maroon cloak. There is grass beneath their feet and flowers are growing round the well and against the wall.

Such lushness is a great contrast to the starkness of the previous scenes, almost like a paradise. The apple-tree could also be reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Is Burne-Jones portraying the lovers as having reached a personal paradise through their suffering and love? If this were so, then the face of Medusa, reminding them of terror and danger in the midst of happiness, becomes particularly significant. Her eyes are closed in death but she is still so terrible that they must protect themselves against her despite the strength of their love, symbolised by their clasped hands.

There are also possible Christian allusions in the painting. Andromeda's robes are reminiscent of those of the Virgin Mary; certainly, blue was always the Christian colour of purity. The spring over which they have joined hands almost ceremonially would be more at home in a church than a garden, and could represent a heavenly blessing on their union. The wall enclosing the garden might then also signify the private nature of a lovers' world.

The notion of a paradise-garden is not, of course, only Judaic and Christian and this interpretation is convincing even if stripped of any religious significance. In the legend of Atlas, one of Perseus' victims, another beautiful garden, also containing an apple-tree, plays a part. That garden is, of course, the Garden of the Hesperides; the apple-tree bears golden fruit, jealously guarded by Atlas but nonetheless eventually lost by him. Whichever tree is here depicted by Burne-Jones the overall significance remains the same. The two lovers have achieved a state of bliss in their beautiful private garden. However, even here Medusa's presence can be felt and her stony gaze has as much power as ever. She is both a reminder of past troubles and a harbinger of possible future ones.

The whole series ends as it began with two people looking into water at a reflection (Perseus and the disguised Athene in the first painting, Perseus and Andromeda in the last) and although the ending is apparently a very happy one, it is by no means as unambiguous as most of Burne-Jones' contemporary critics seem to assume. His paintings are complex expressions of emotions and in the background there is always a hint of despair. It was Burne-Jones himself who declared, "Hope is a mere luxury, not a necessity- the fortunate may safely indulge in it". (G.B-J. 334)

N O T E S

1. These paintings were bought by the Chipperfield Bequest for Southampton in 1934 from Lady Violet Henderson, at a cost of £3,500 for the series of ten. Lady Violet bought them from Lord Faringdon, who had purchased them directly from Burne-Jones.
2. Four paintings were completed in oils and are now housed in the Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. They are "The Baleful Head" (from "Perseus and his Bride"), "The Rock of Doom" (from "The Rescue of Andromeda"), "The Doom Fulfilled" (from "Perseus Slaying the Serpent") and "Perseus and the Graiae". In addition, the Staatsgalerie owns several full studies for individual pictures; "Perseus and the Sea-Nymphs", "The Arming of Perseus", "The Death of Medusa", "The Finding of Medusa".
3. "The Court of Phineus" was apparently intended to depict Perseus brandishing the Gorgon's head before a petrified Phineus in the hall of Cepheus' palace. Burne-Jones was quite aware that the battle between the suitors took place at Cepheus' palace, not Phineus' so the projected title of the painting is somewhat of a mystery. Perhaps it is simply a conflation of the two elements, Phineus' death and the court setting.
4. The list of projected paintings is as follows:
 1. Danae in garden looking at tower being built.
 2. Danae in tower - maids about her wailing and tearing their hair.
 3. Shower of gold.
 4. Pushed off to sea from end of pier - child in arms.
 5. Run aground at island. Dictys looking at her.
 6. King welcoming her.
 7. King watching Danae in garden.
 8. Perseus at feast. King making much of him.

9. Perseus meeting Minerva as old woman - M. changing to goddess, giving him armour.
10. Flies away, earth beneath him.
11. Lands at Graiae, snatching eye. Graiae not looking at him because he's invisible - make them look^{ing} different ways.
12. Make him dipping in sea nearing land, birds flying about with snakes in their bills.
13. Medusa walking up and down hall - other 2 sisters squatting.
14. 2 sisters lamenting over body. P. flying away with head.
15. Turning folk into stone in Atlas' hall - great big brutes of chaps.
16. Flying over Africa - over sea and land - getting to sea again.
17. High up in air. Andromeda a little fig. below.
18. Unchaining Andromeda - A. naked.
19. Fight with beast.
20. Showing head to Andromeda. A. clothed.
21. Reception in city - walking with A. King meeting them.
22. Phineus bursting into hall. Perseus showing head.
23. in ship, people on land saying goodbye.
24. Danae in temple. Polydectes turned into stone.
25. Death of Acrisius, old chap running along.
26. Perseus on throne with Danae and A. people building Mycenae.
27. Minerva taking Agis from temple and wearing it. Agis without head.
28. Tomb of P. and image of Minerva with head on Agis

This list is obviously based on William Morris's narrative in The Earthly Paradise (it is even entitled "Doom of Acrisius")

5. He was the object of much contemporary criticism as well, for all his popularity in influential circles (see, for example, the "Illustrated London News" {April 30th, 1870} 459 or "The Times" of the same date). This criticism often led to satirical attacks. "Punch" on May 19th, 1888 included a cartoon of the New Gallery and depicted as part of it a caricature of Perseus slaying the

serpent. In "Punch"'s version the hero is wrestling with a plumbing system; the caption read, "Drat these new pipes". Fitzgerald 216 describes this cartoon, giving the artist's name as Furniss: her "Andromache" is a slip for "Andromeda".

6. Contemporary appreciations of Burne-Jones' work seem to tend to the former view, "charming" being a word much used to describe his pictures. This was not only true of his own country. Burne-Jones had a good following in France and Paul Leprieux, for example, in his article "La Légende de Persée" Gazette des Beaux Arts 3, 1893 462-477 is effusive in his praise of such an example of "les contes de fées" .
The paintings are undoubtedly sensual, particularly of course, the nudes (cf. Hilton 200). However, there is a world of difference between the subtle eroticism of, say, the naked Andromeda and the blatant sexuality of later works such as Beardsley's. Beardsley was in fact an admirer of Burne-Jones early in his life. He visited the painter at his home in Rottingdean and was given encouragement by him. Burne-Jones was profoundly disappointed by the young man's later work, however. Fitzgerald 248 reports his reaction to the publication of the Morte d'Arthur: "He was bitterly disappointed. Some of the drawings were slovenly - Beardsley had got tired of the commission - and others were fantasies on his own style with borders of phallic stalks and pods. Burne-Jones was under no illusion as to why he mistrusted both these and the later drawings. 'Lust does frighten me, I must say', he told Rooke. 'It looks like despair - despair of any happiness ... I don't know why I've such a dread of lust. Whether it is the fear of what might happen to me if I were to lose all fortitude ... let myself rush downhill without any restraint'." This fear of lust, of loss of control, combined with his extreme susceptibility to female beauty could help to explain the atmosphere of eternal longing which pervades all his work.
7. He learned Latin from a young age but was not introduced to

Greek until about fifteen years old. This was because he started his education at King Edward's School, Birmingham, in the "Commercial" school and did not switch to the "Classical" school until Oxford or Cambridge became an obvious possibility for him. Once he started to learn Greek, his progress was, apparently, very rapid and he soon caught up with his fellow pupils.

8. Burne-Jones' friendship with Ruskin, which began as early as 1856, suffered a temporary break in 1870. Ruskin summoned Burne-Jones to his house at Denmark Hill and read to him a strongly worded attack upon Michelangelo. Fitzgerald explains (131): "Ned could hardly doubt that the Professor had learned from some source or other - possibly from Howell - of the crisis in his marriage and had related it to the Michelangelesque drawing of the naked Demophoon. It was a reproof to his life through his painting, and Ruskin, in his own way, seemed to have deserted him as surely as the Old Water-colour Society". The "Michelangelesque drawing of the naked Demophoon" is, of course, "Phyllis and Demophoon" or "The Tree of Forgiveness" which had been unaccountably withdrawn from the summer exhibition of The Old Water-colour Society by the organisers. This action led to the painter's resignation from the Society.

The breach in the friendship, a breach which caused Burne-Jones much pain, was, however, healed in 1872 when he attended one of Ruskin's Slade lectures at Oxford.

9. The list reads as follows: " Vases - Perseus with Graiae 425-442,- receiving talaria, helmet and kibisis from Naiades 584, receiving harpe etc. from Naiades 1686, harpe from Athene 1513, killing Medusa 641, flying over Libyan mountains 548, at court of Cepheus 801, Danae and the shower 38 ... Hades helmet of 548, 584, 801, 1513".
10. Although he was undoubtedly influenced by the vases in the technique and physical form of his pictures, they did not affect

the material he chose to portray. For example, the pose of the fallen Medusa, headless but still propped upon her hands, may well have been inspired by a vase-painting, but the vase did not influence his decision to show that scene in the first place. He only studied the ways of portraying various aspects of the story after having taken the decision to paint them.

11. Ruskin Queen of the Air 30 considers this sword to be the "sword of destruction" which will destroy evil.
12. See Bell Sir Edward Burne-Jones. A Record and Review (London 1894) 75. There is no mention of Jebb being acquainted with Burne-Jones in his entry in D.N.B. but he did have a long-standing, deep friendship with Tennyson. As Burne-Jones also knew Tennyson (see G. B-J. Volume I 182, 303 Volume 2. 102,230), it is possible that it was through the poet that Jebb came to write this inscription.
13. Throughout his life, Burne-Jones became helplessly devoted to a series of girls, often far younger than himself or his wife. Even his relationship with his daughter Margaret had an unusual passionate intensity and he suffered agonies of jealousy and despair when she married the classical scholar J.W. Mackail.

These girls often became the subjects of his paintings. Lady Burne-Jones glosses over this aspect of her husband's character in her Memorials and particularly does not mention his passion for Maria Zambaco, a Greek girl. However, we must not assume that these were sexual, in the sense of physical, relationships. Burne-Jones, with his devotion to the Romantic Age of Chivalry, seems rather to have "worshipped at the altar of youth" and never seems to have attempted to conceal these attachments. His attitude to this type of feeling is probably summed up in his painting "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" (now in the Tate Gallery); the rich, all-powerful king sits helplessly before the pure, unyielding beauty of the beggar-maid.

14. Cf. Giotto. In his "Adoration of the Magi", for example, he uses the single sweeping hill behind the group of figures to emphasize their nobility and stateliness and he creates a connection between "Joachim Retires to the Sheepfold" and "The Sacrifice of Joachim" by the similarity of the landscape in the background. Cesare Grudi in the Encyclopedia of World Art Volume 6, 346 describes Giotto's art thus: "In Giotto's art, reality was not constricted but was intensified by that metaphysical order in which the soul's impulses were represented 'sub specie aeternitatis'. The inner reality of passions and spirit generated new forms, created their architecture, and determined their spatial articulation."
- See also Carlo Steiner Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs Volume 5, 18.
15. John Ruskin's opinion on the subject of truth to Nature in art is given in Modern Painters Vol. 2; 3, 21. His theory was shared and followed carefully by painters like Holman Hunt: " ... go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing."
- Burne-Jones could almost have been offering a direct reply when he is reported to have exclaimed: "Transcripts from Nature, what do I want with transcripts? I prefer her own signature; I don't want forgeries more or less skilful". (G.B-J Volume 2, 261).
- 16 Ford Madox Brown was not, of course, actually a member of the original Brotherhood (neither was Burne-Jones) but his work is undoubtedly Pre-Raphaelite in concept and philosophy. The original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (formed in 1848) comprised Holman Hunt, Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his brother William, Frederic Stephens, Thomas Woolner the sculptor and James Collinson.

Social realism was not confined to Ford Madox Brown, although his paintings are the most obvious examples. Holman Hunt painted "The Awakening Conscience", in which a young girl starts to rise from the lap of her male companion as she realises the wrongness of her behaviour. Rossetti painted "Found", the discovery by a farmer of his long-lost love, now a prostitute on the streets of London. Even Millais, notorious now for works such as "Bubbles" and "Cherry Ripe", was concerned to convey a social message in some of his earlier paintings and sketches. "Retribution" shows a man's past catching up with him, "The Prisoner's Wife" is a sketch of a desperate woman clutching at the passing judge. The subjects of "The Order of Release" and "The Gambler's Wife" are obvious.

17. Cf. E. Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance London 1958 cc. 2 and 3.
18. Undoubtedly the number of pictures also helps to create a smooth narrative. By contrast, the Pygmalion sequence, for example, has none of this smoothness; the four scenes, representing four different episodes in the legend, are separate from one another. However, the sense of the eye being led on in the Perseus cycle is so strong that it cannot be accounted for by sheer weight of numbers. There is a definite forward movement brought about by the details of each picture's composition.
19. This picture, oil on canvas, is now owned by the National Gallery of South Australia. It is entitled "Perseus and Andromeda". On the left Perseus first encounters Andromeda, chained to the rock, and on the right he fights the serpent. The designs are very similar to those of the separate pictures.

For an interpretation of this painting, see M.P. Harris' article in the Bulletin of the National Gallery of South Australia, January 1947 pp. 6-17. She describes it as a vision of a "Dayspring emerging from the coils of darkness to wed the Dawn

of a New Era".

20. Perino del Vaga (born Buonaccorsi) was a disciple of Raphael and a most distinguished painter during his life-time (he lived from 1500 to 1547). His life is recorded in Vasari's Lives of the Artists. The painting in question is a fresco, one of a series with which del Vaga decorated several chambers of the castle. The whole frieze tells the story of Perseus. Interestingly, del Vaga also used stories from Ovid to decorate four apartments of Prince Dona's palace in Genoa earlier in his career. See also B. Berenson Italian Pictures of the Renaissance "Central Italian and North Italian Schools" Volume I, 323. Thieme and Becker Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler Leipzig 1907.
21. Gent describes this quality as "that truly complex Pre-Raphaelite sense of the past, not as something merely decorative and exotic, but as possessing eternally through the artist's exercising of his powers the implicit qualities of a past and future, which allow for his and our use of moral judgement". Other examples of this kind of painting include Holman Hunt's "The Lady of Shalott" (the spell under which she has her existence is just unravelling), "The Last of England" by Ford Madox Brown (why are the couple leaving? What awaits them?) and "Tree of Forgiveness" by Burne-Jones (Phyllis, emerging from the tree, is in the act of embracing Demophoon as he passes).
22. The painter was of Welsh extraction and the element of melancholy in his temperament led him to be attracted to the wistful sadness found in many Celtic stories. His wife remarks upon his love of Celtic literature (G.B-J Volume 2. 41ff.) and reports his own words on the subject. Burne-Jones was first attracted after reading Macpherson's Ossian in which he detected a "f^rolorn note that gently broke my heart, like the blessed word 'Mesopotamia'" (G.B-J. 42). Explaining his reasons for taking so much time and trouble in the study of Celtic literature, he said "I wanted to track that blissful sweet song

piteous into the thick of the forest and I did it at last".
(G.B-J. 43). Unlike his great friend Morris, however, he was
never especially drawn to the Norse legends.

For another, more likely explanation of the origins of the
entwining serpent see Note 14, Chapter 3.

"The Doom of King Acrisius" by William Morris

The Earthly Paradise concerns the journey of the Wanderers, a group of men in search of "a shadowy isle of bliss". Although they fail to find it, they do reach "some Western land" where they spend the rest of their lives. They tell their hosts there various stories, two for each month of the year (one Classical and one Norse or Medieval). There is an Apology and a Prologue before the work proper begins and each month has a short introduction of its own.

"The Doom of King Acrisius" is the third story in The Earthly Paradise, the first of the pair for the month of April. We know from May Morris's introduction to the work (C.W. volume 3) that her father wrote "Acrisius" very early, after "The Story of Cupid and Psyche", "The Lady of the Land", "The Palace East of the Sun and West of the Moon" and "Adrastus" (the last being omitted from the final version of The Earthly Paradise).

Morris tells the whole story of Acrisius and his descendants from the hearing of the oracle and the imprisonment of Danaë to the death of Perseus. However, I shall only discuss in detail the portion immediately relevant to our concerns, that is from Perseus' encounter with Athene on the seashore to the defeat of Phineus and his followers.

According to May Morris (C.W. volume 3, xviiij), "The classical stories in 'The Earthly Paradise' are mostly taken from the obvious sources, very often from the familiar Lemprière¹, which I suppose this generation scarcely knows by name." It is impossible to ascertain which edition of Lemprière's dictionary Morris used but this is not important with the Perseus legend; the story is not revised after the 1797 edition. Lemprière offers a comprehensive summary of the legend which apparently draws on several major sources. The first part of the story follows Pherecydes and Apollodorus. The section from the death of Medusa to the defeat of Phineus (at least) is obviously derived from Ovid and the final part of the narration is also reminiscent of Apollodorus, amongst others. Morris presumably used the actual account

given by Lemprière as the basis for his version and looked up certain easily obtainable or already familiar sources for additional material.

It has been suggested² that Morris simply followed Apollodorus in his account of the story but this is obviously not so. Apollodorus gives a straightforward narration of events which is completely lacking in descriptive detail or characterisation. The only descriptive detail he does give (of the Gorgons as scaly, tusked and winged) is ignored by Morris. Moreover, there are several differences in the actual events related that are too important to be overlooked. For example, Apollodorus says that Perseus visited the Graiae to find out the whereabouts of the Nymphs, who then armed him³. Morris, on the other hand, follows the version cited by Lemprière in which Perseus is armed by Athene and visits the Graiae for information about their sisters, the Gorgons. Apollodorus is vague about the status of Perseus' rival, Phineus, and calls him a conspirator who plotted against the hero. Morris's treatment of Phineus is quite different. However, perhaps the most significant difference occurs in relation to the story of Atlas which Apollodorus does not mention at all. It is clear that Morris did not derive his version of the legend only from Apollodorus; it will become evident that he also made use at least of Ovid.

"The Doom of King Acrisius" is set in April, "the life of all the year". In its introduction Morris shows how the story, though ancient, is as fresh as spring-time; each telling of it is a refreshing and pleasing experience. This is the usual poetic view of spring as the promise of the year to come, a time of growth and life. However, as Morris reminds us, April is not only a time to look forward to new experiences; it is also a time for remembering the past. All too often past hopes have not been realised and the years seem to have been in vain. Morris had great difficulty in coming to terms with man's mortality and to some extent the Perseus story offers a solution to this problem.

If death is inevitable, then human existence can only have meaning if it is lived well and honourably. The paradoxes and injustices

of life have to be accepted. Fate is the great shaping power in life and cannot be cheated; it forms the framework within which each man works to live a meaningful life. This philosophy shapes the main themes running through "Acrisius". Morris emphasises the influence of fate on all that happens but it is not an excuse for moral irresponsibility. Perseus' status as a hero is examined and questioned and Morris is also concerned to show the effects of the use and misuse of power, upon both wielder and victim.

The story of Perseus' adventures begins when Athene, disguised as an old woman, encounters him as he walks unhappily along the seashore at dusk⁴. She submits him to a kind of test of virtue, asking what he would do if he were to find Medusa. He gives the correct answer; he would put his faith in the gods. Athene then reveals herself as a goddess. Morris uses the light of the moon to dramatise the revelation. As the moon rises, its light changes from yellow to white, illuminating the transformed goddess. She addresses Perseus in a speech full of classical allusions and gives him his directions.

Morris was much influenced by his master, Chaucer, and has chosen to write ^{part of} The Earthly Paradise in rhyming couplets. Such a rhyme scheme is difficult to sustain and at times Morris fails to do so. The form tends to require meaningless phrases to pad out lines and occasionally syntax has to be contorted to accommodate the rhyme. On the other hand, rhyming couplets give a certain speed and smoothness to a poem and these perhaps more than compensate for the difficulties in a poem as long as The Earthly Paradise. The influence of Chaucer can be seen too in the Morris' archaisms; Athene, for example, here uses the word "reck" and Perseus later uses "certes". Verbal forms are also often archaic.

Morris has a great liking for detail and naturalism which can lead to slight absurdities. Thus Athene is forced to explain that she cannot herself tell Perseus where Medusa lives because she swore never to mention the name of the land when she first placed the Gorgons there. This explanation seems to be an invention by Morris and clearly

illustrates his love of the seemingly unnecessary detail, a tendency he shares with Ovid.

After a very long journey, Perseus reaches his destination, vividly described as a land of ice, grey moss and a "leaden tideless sea"; the home of the Graiae. He enters their palace, invisible, as Morris reminds us. Perseus is in fact compared with invisible death, aptly since he is indeed the personification of death for Medusa. The palace of the Graiae is white marble and they sit on a dais at the far end of its hall.

Morris's description of the three old women is clear and detailed; they are

"Clad in blue sweeping cloak and snow-white gown;
While o'er their backs their straight white hair hung down
In long thin locks; dreadful their faces were
Carved all about with wrinkles of despair;
And as they sat they crooned a dreary song,
Complaining that their lives should last so long,
In that sad place that no one came anear,
In that wan place desert of hope and fear;
And singing, still they rocked their bodies bent,
And ever each to each the eye they sent."

This is a pathetic picture, made awful by the knowledge that they are doomed to such an existence for eternity. They are ceaselessly engaged in meaningless activity (passing the eye and rocking) and are reduced to a state where they no more feel even fear, that most primitive of emotions. They have reached the extremity of despair.

The Graiae's complaints about the length of their lives in this sinister place anticipate those of Medusa. Morris is sympathetic towards these doomed creatures, seeming to find their lack of human contact particularly horrifying. When Perseus snatches the eye, one of the Graiae cries,

"... 'O sisters, he is here
That we were warned so long ago to fear,"

This is an invention by Morris, just as Atlas' prophecy was an invention of Ovid (cf. the prophecy given to Polyphemus, Od. 9. 507ff.). It emphasises the role of fate in all events past and to come, a role which Morris saw as of paramount importance and on which he places increasing emphasis as the story progresses. The Graiae, like their sister, are victims of a fate over which they have no control.

Throughout this episode Morris makes frequent use of the word "dreary": "dreary land", "dreary song", "dreary land" again and "dreary country". The word implies not only a physical state (grey, lifeless, featureless landscape) but also an atmosphere which affects those who live in or look upon such a land. Despite this, Morris's Graiae resist Perseus more strongly than in other versions of the story and it is many hours later that he finally procures his information.

Perseus is helped by Athene who has set "godlike courage" in his heart, but the roles of the hero and the gods are given a new interpretation by the Graiae in their defeat. They describe Perseus as "Slave of the cruel gods!" and "Tool in the hand of god!", phrases which give a different perspective to the story, coming as they do immediately after the mention of Athene's intervention. Instead of being a free agent, Perseus is seen merely as an instrument of revenge. This is a valid view; he has made no attempt to find out why Medusa should be killed, and indeed his oath that he would kill her himself was uttered merely as a boast to impress Polydectes. He is being manipulated, and the Graiae's words cast doubt on the moral value of his exploit, belittling its standing as a heroic quest. There is bitter irony in their cry "do there thy might!" but Perseus is unmoved and sets off to find the home of the Gorgons, apparently even more desolate than that of the Graiae.

After a minor adventure in which his feet drag in the sea and he has to pray to Athene for aid, Perseus approaches Medusa's abode. Birds fly around with snakes in their beaks and below him a stream writhes with serpents, reminders of Medusa's power. The land is "untrodden" but Perseus makes his way to a great black hall which rises

out of the desolate wilderness and even before he sees Medusa he hears her anguished cry. Again, Morris reminds us of the presence and protection of Athene; Perseus is "Well shielded by the grey-eyed Maiden's love."

Before Perseus sit two Gorgons "bent and old" like the Graiae⁵ but quite silent. Their eyes are "grown stony with their long distress", an obvious parallel with Medusa whose eyes make others grow stony. Their lack of movement and sound makes them infinitely pitiable, frozen in their deep distress like Niobe⁶. By contrast, Medusa is pacing about the hall, moving her head and shrieking her despair.

Morris portrays Medusa not as a hideous monster but as a hapless victim, a doomed figure to be pitied rather than feared. He emphasises how hideous she finds herself, her great beauty now horribly transformed. Her shoulders shudder as the snakes glide over them or her breast, or twine themselves around her ankles. Some of her beauty remains; white shoulders, golden tresses of hair amid the snakes, fine ankles⁷. She is dressed in a thin red garment and a jewelled waistband, a bitter reminder of the fateful day when she was transformed, as it was a gift from Neptune.

There is nothing in Morris's portrayal of Medusa to indicate that she deserved her punishment. Perseus ("unseen") is so touched with pity that he hesitates to kill her but Athene intervenes to prompt him:

" 'Does she desire to live, who has been brought
Into such utter woe and misery,
Wherefrom no god or man can set her free,
Since Pallas' dreadful vow shall bind her fast,
Till earth and heaven are gone, and all is past?
- And yet, would God the thing were at an end'."

For the second time the power of an oath over even the gods is emphasised. More importantly perhaps, Athene betrays her own feelings about Medusa. She desperately longs to be rid of the guilt, of the constant living reminder of her (perhaps rash) action.

Athene's words seem to imply that revenge is not sweet, that it can affect the avenger as well as the victim. It might even be argued that by using her power in this way, to wreak a spiteful revenge upon a hapless girl, Athene has initiated a chain of events which affect a wide circle of people, including herself, and that this provides an example of the results of a misuse of power. Thoughtless actions can have far-reaching consequences and not even the gods can control fate, once a sequence of events is set in motion.

The reference to Neptune's gift to Medusa shows that Morris was aware of the story of Medusa's rape by the god. She is in fact doubly a victim; she was robbed of her virginity by Neptune, then afflicted with a grievous punishment by Athene because the violation took place in the goddess's temple. Our pity for Medusa is strengthened when she speaks. She prays for death as her only release, pleading with the gods whom she considers most unjust because they give death to those who do not wish it and deny it to those like her. Morris emphasised Medusa's humanity and the fact that, though she has been cut off from all the normal pleasures of human life, she has not lost her human emotions. The deformities which make her repulsive to others also make her repulsive to herself and she is in constant torment as a result.

Now she makes a pathetic plea to Neptune⁸ to be mindful of his promises to her, and asks only that he give her death instead. She refers to the god as "dweller in the shifting halls of blue" which lie "beneath the treacherous bridge of land". The words "shifting" and "treacherous" seem equally applicable to Neptune himself, her betrayer. Similarly, Athene's temple is "white and cold", attributes which the goddess shares. Medusa's prayers are finally answered when the invisible Perseus beheads her from behind with the magic sword. The other Gorgons see her fall and stare up to find her killer.

As the remaining Gorgons cannot see Perseus, they throw themselves on their sister's body and begin to wail their grief. Their distress is increased when they see each other across the corpse; for them not even the release of death is possible. Their plight does not

affect Perseus, however, and he continues his journey. The phrase "But of their woe but little Perseus knew" may be seen not only as a reference to his rapid departure but also as a comment upon his character.

Perseus places Medusa's head in a wallet (though there is no indication that this is the kibisis given for the purpose either by Athene or the sea-nymphs) and flies on his way to Libya. Here he is to encounter Atlas, the giant. He enters a silver palace and is confronted by great numbers of "monstrous men" with brown skin and black hair. They are not friendly, but Morris emphasises the fact that Perseus has fate on his side and will therefore triumph. Atlas, like Medusa and even her sisters, is a doomed creature⁹. Perseus has been led to the Libyan plain by "strong fate" and all Atlas' strength will be useless; "vain is might against the stroke of fate."

Morris's emphasis on fate as the prime mover of things has a double effect. It gives a sense of helplessness and sadness to the poem because that is how it presents the situation of men; it also diminishes the notion of individual choice. If things cannot be other than as fate intends them, then even men's actions are pre-determined. This is, of course, a simplification; Morris undoubtedly felt that men do have an element of free will and can make moral decisions. However, his emphasis on the power of fate tends to decrease Perseus' stature as a "hero" and strengthens the Graiae's view of him as a "tool".

Atlas is unnecessarily antagonistic towards his visitor, mocking him without provocation. Perseus acknowledges his debts to the gods in his retort, calling them "equal". This appears to be a Latinism, the equivalent of "aequus" which can mean "just", "fair", even "benevolent", or "favourable". In the same speech, Perseus refers to the giants as "earthly men", recalling the Greek γῆγενεῖς (gigantes). The giants were indeed earthly men, born of Ge, the mother earth.

Atlas, without even the excuse of a prophecy, tries to have Perseus killed. However, the giant's cruelty is matched by Perseus. Having half-drawn his sword, he decides instead to use the Gorgon's

head and turns his enemies to stone. Morris makes great play with the images of death and stone here. Perseus' smile is "deadly" and his attackers are struck "stone dead". The reader is reminded of Medusa's original beauty and her sad story even when her head is being used as a weapon; her once-beautiful hair is still "golden".

Perseus' attitude to his enemy's defeat is disturbing. He mocks the giant after he is turned to stone and, having slept the night in "a dreamless sleep", he rejoices when he awakes to see his victim. The unpleasantness of such behaviour is given an even more sinister twist in his following speech;

" ... who now shall 'scape

When I am angry, while this gift I have?

How well my needy lovers I may save

While this dread thing still hangeth by my side!"

Perseus' first thought is how he will use the head against others when he is angry; there is no suggestion that he would have to suffer any wrong first. Only as a second thought does it occur to him to use the head for good, to aid his friends. The head is seen as a weapon with which he can subject others to his own will.

Morris uses this episode as an example of how power can corrupt men and how easily it can be misused. However, he also emphasises the temporary nature of any such power; Perseus only possesses it while he holds the head. The reader is aware that Perseus' words also contain a prophecy: the Gorgon's head will indeed be used to save a "needy lover" when Perseus rescues Andromeda. Perseus flies off over Africa on his way to this next adventure. As he does so, Morris again indicates the sinister aspects of the hero. His presence overhead is enough to give men "ugly dreams" and make them grab their weapons in their sleep: Perseus is a malign figure who contaminates his surroundings.

At last Perseus reaches the sea and is blown about on the ocean until he comes to a coastline. On a promontory he sees a wooden tower and again we are reminded that he is "unseen" (he seems to have worn the helmet of Hades for all his adventures except the confrontation

with Atlas). The sea coast is vividly described; everything is "bright and fair", in great contrast to the "Pale, . . . haggard faces" within the tower and to his previous landfalls. A cry alerts him to a human figure below the cliff. He draws near, "made invisible by Pallas' aid" (Morris continues to emphasise the divine help he is receiving), and finds Andromeda chained to a rock, naked.

The whole scene has a vividly pictorial quality¹⁰. It is brightly lit and full of colour: black rocks, yellow hawks, brown seaweed, pale-blue sky, white walls, green earth, purple shadows, golden hair. There are numerous details to help the reader imagine the scene exactly; the newness of the tower's wooden beams, the rolling downs inland, the sandy bay being filled by the tide, the low rocks and thin clouds.

From the general view, the reader (like Perseus) is directed to focus attention upon Andromeda. She too is described in detail. Her clothes lie at her feet, giving a subtle eroticism to the picture¹¹. They are

"Worthy to be the ransom of a king,

Unworthy round such loveliness to cling."

The use of the word "cling" heightens the erotic feeling, which is also emphasised by the sensuality of the next lines. Andromeda's limbs tremble, her eyes are restless and she catches her breath.

Perseus falls immediately in love with her and with a dramatic gesture reveals his presence;

"Grown like unto a god for pride and might,

Down on the sand the mystic cap he cast

And stood before her with flushed face at last,

And grey eyes glittering with his great desire

Beneath his hair, that like a harmless fire

Blown by the wind shone in her hopeless eyes."

It is significant that for Morris the two qualities of gods are pride and might; they have no moral superiority. The description of Perseus' eyes as "glittering with his great desire" is surprisingly sexual.

There is no doubt about his physical passion. This scene, and that of Danaë's seduction earlier in the poem, conclusively disprove the assertions of those critics¹² who accuse Morris of being without passion: the first encounter between the two young lovers is full of suppressed sexual feeling.

In contrast to Perseus, who reveals himself proudly, Andromeda attempts to hide her face with her hands, imagining him at first to be her Death and then a god. When she speaks she draws a vivid contrast between Perseus' appearance and the "worm" which she expected to see¹³. Her speech allows the audience to experience her fears and hopes as her emotions fluctuate wildly between joy and despair. Her punishment is quite unjust, perhaps another example of the misuse of power and the arbitrary working of fate. She has undergone extremes of terror and has been forced to recognise the great weaknesses of human beings, experiences her obviously sheltered upbringing would not have prepared her for. The reader is filled with pity for the beautiful girl, shame at the behaviour of the people of Joppa and distaste for the conduct of the gods. Morris succeeds in portraying Andromeda as a real person by showing her mind at work in this way. Her speech is rather longer than any which Perseus makes, for Morris has reversed the emphasis usual in other versions of the tale; instead of Perseus the hero, it is Andromeda the victim who is the central figure.

During this speech Perseus apparently takes advantage of Andromeda's chains to steal a kiss for she cries out:

"Dost thou not kiss me now for very scorn?

Alas, my sin! no green-stemmed laurel tree

Shall mock thy grasp, ... "

The reference to the laurel tree is, of course, an allusion to the story of Daphne (see Ovid M.1. 452ff.). Despite Andromeda's fears about his intentions, her feelings are rapidly growing ever warmer towards Perseus and she weeps copiously as "love and shame" strive within her. Perseus is moved by her words and appearance. He is immediately certain that the gods have sent him to help her and he releases her from her chains. The paradox of the situation is underlined when Andromeda describes the monster to which she was being sacrificed as "God-endowed".

One divinity is helping man to overcome the punishment of another, a frequent situation in heroic myths.

Once again the influence of fate is stressed, this time by Perseus himself. He has already declared his certainty that he has been sent to her; now he announces:

"... thy fate shall be my fate,"
and calls her his "most god-like gift". During this encounter with Andromeda, Perseus in fact shows a far more sympathetic aspect of his character. He is genuinely in love with the girl and quite prepared to die for her. His declaration that he could not live a "loveless life of shame" is obviously genuine. Morris manages to convey the reality and depth of the two lovers' feelings for each other, despite the extreme rapidity with which they have fallen in love. He combines the romantic with the passionate very skillfully, as in the touching mixture of wistfulness and fatalism contained in Andromeda's words "For certainly I should have loved thee well."

Suddenly the monster is approaching and the reader's attention moves from the romantic figures of Perseus and Andromeda to the hideous spectacle of the sea-serpent. The following passage is a good example of Morris's strength (and occasionally of his weakness) as a poet. He is able at times to create phrases of great beauty ("the drifting wonder of her hair") and vivid horror ("a huge mass on the oozing sand"- "oozing" transfers readily to "mass", giving a clear impression of the repulsively slimy movement of the creature). He is also able to add drama to an already dramatic scene; the tense atmosphere as the monster approaches is pierced suddenly by a "dismal trumpet-blast". Although Morris's description of the sea-creature is in some respects unoriginal ("red eyes" and "bare skull"), he also adds vivid and refreshing details: the hair of the creature is described as growing in grey tufts like the moss on "some old tree"; his body is in great black folds and his glowing eyes are lidless. This horrible picture is perhaps spoiled by the reference to the monster's head as a "torture-chamber" but it is a brief lapse.

As the actual combat begins, Perseus is surrounded by the folds
fo the creature's body¹⁴;

"His bright face shadowed by the jaws of death,

His hair blown backward by the poisonous breath;"

However, he soon kills the monster. Particularly noteworthy, perhaps, is Morris's use of contrasting sound to enforce the visual effects he is trying to create in this episode. The tension as the creature approached was pierced by a trumpet-blast and now after the hideous roaring of the monster during the battle there is suddenly peace again, broken only by the natural sounds of the sea-shore:

"And then again in place of crash and roar,

He heard the shallow breakers on the shore,

And o'er his head the sea-gull's plaintive cry,"

Throughout this episode Morris describes Perseus as "god-like", an attribute he seems to have acquired through his own endeavours rather than divine intervention. Brought to the situation by fate, he then performs a heroic deed, the rescue of Andromeda, without either the supernatural assistance of Medusa's head or divine prompting from Athene. He reaches this "god-like" state through human courage and the rescue seems to be the fulfilment of his destiny and the culmination of his being. This notion is most important to Morris and is repeated in more general terms at the end of "The Doom of King Acrisius" when such "valiant strife" is seen as the only way to cope with the certainty of old age and death. Even at the happy moment of conquest and rescue, however, Morris reminds his readers of the fickleness of life. The sea-gulls cry; "Careless as gods for who might live or die". Such a point of view seems Epicurean.

Morris continues to describe everything from Andromeda's point of view. Now she is so happy that the whole world seems to exist only for her in her "new life"¹⁵. After a loving silence and a few questions about Perseus' origins, she expresses a desire to see the Gorgon's head. It has to be viewed in a salt pool before the tide comes in and the sight of the head, so beautiful that it hardly seems dead, terrifies her. She cries out to Perseus, "I think thou wilt not die:" In a sense her

prophecy is later fulfilled, not only for Perseus but also for herself, because after their deaths the lovers are placed in the sky as eternal stars. However, Perseus does suffer death and it is significant that Morris carries the story through to this event; although a romantic, he was also a realist. Perseus achieves the highest state possible for a human being, that of "godlike man", but he is not a god and death is inevitable even for him.

Perseus now lifts the Gorgon's head from the sand and the couple set off for the town. Andromeda relates her story as they go: her mother, Cassiope, had angered the sea-nymphs by setting up an altar to her own daughter and usurping their worship¹⁶. Her people were much afraid of the consequences of such presumptuous behaviour and were convinced that some terrible thing would result from this excessive maternal pride, as in the story of Niobe and her children. This comparison is apt, for just as Niobe's innocent children were made to suffer for their mother's sin, so Andromeda had to bear the punishment for Cassiope. The mention of Niobe, who was turned to a rock by her grief, also maintains the petrification motif which underlies the whole story of Perseus.

In Andromeda's narration of the coming of the sea-monster Morris brings out the parallel between this tale and that of St. George and the dragon. He introduces the snatching of a "fair maid" and the slaying of men who try to kill the creature. This slaughter continues for some time before the people decide to sacrifice Andromeda. The fact that the procession through the streets as she is led to her death is described through Andromeda's eyes gives the scene a particular kind of horror. Morris makes his own sympathy for her as an innocent victim obvious. He emphasises her utter despair;

"Most vain to me were grown all ways of men"

There is a vividly realistic touch in the difficulty she feels in accepting that these events happened only that morning; the human mind frequently distances itself in this way from terrifying experiences.

Once Andromeda had been transported to the sea-shore, she was

chained naked to the rock and the people took away the statue erected by her mother for her worship to place on her empty tomb (there could, of course, be no body). The exchange of the girl's living body for a statue of her again recalls the petrification motif. In a sense she is suffering the same fate as Medusa's victims, turned to stone; the exchange symbolises her death¹⁷.

Andromeda's description of what was done to her compels in the reader feelings of shame for the human failings it reveals. The people of Joppa were so terrified for their own lives that they would do anything to escape death. Andromeda, obviously sheltered and loved up to this point, is horrified at such revelations about human nature:

"O cruel is the fearfulness of men,

Striving a little while to 'scape death's pain!"

The phrase "a little while" underlines the point; men's shameful actions can do no more than delay their own deaths. Once again Morris is expressing his philosophy about how to live and die, in the face of death's inevitability. This episode shows how men are robbed of their humanity by the fear of death. Again, we are reminded that Morris found death extremely hard to accept himself. This philosophy represents his attempt to come to terms with it. In contrast with the people of Joppa, of course, Perseus is indeed "godlike" because he shows real courage and is prepared to die rather than live what he himself calls "a loveless life of shame".

Andromeda refers to her betrayers' return to their own homes to live "Such vain forgetful life as fate might give."

The image is reminiscent of Breughel's painting of Icarus which shows the young man plunging to his death in the sea while all around life continues as usual¹⁸. The world's insensitivity to personal tragedy is perhaps one of the more difficult aspects of human existence to accept. In one phrase Morris conveys the ease with which men can forget, or ignore, the pain of their fellows. He also implies that in this case the price to be paid (Andromeda's life) is too high; these lives are not worth the sacrifice of hers. The mention of fate also reminds us that it is futile to strive against the inevitable. The people of Joppa have only escaped death temporarily.

Andromeda is obviously still shocked and horrified by what has been done to her but Perseus comforts her. Just as the sea covers the shore, blotting everything out, so, he explains, will their new-found love erase the dark memories of their former lives. It is an image of re-birth. He then extends the comparison to include death, "that dull night", which also creeps up slowly and blots out life. Perseus urges Andromeda to value her happiness all the more while she possesses it because death will surely come one day and end it;

"Yet for that thought hold closer to thy bliss"
Happiness, like power, is transient; only death is certain.

The sentiment is reminiscent of Chaucer¹⁹. For example, at the beginning of Book 1 of Troilus and Criseyde, Chaucer exhorts lovers hearing his tale to show compassion towards those less fortunate than themselves;

"And preith for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here." (Lines 29-30)

Moreover, he explains that the transitory nature of happiness and good fortune gives them an added intensity. The philosophy of the power of fate and the mutability of fortune so evident in the works of some medieval writers, and particularly Chaucer, is symbolised in the image of the Wheel of Fortune²⁰. Morris was influenced by this notion of fate's transience, as is evident in "The Doom of King Acrisius".

The lovers proceed to Joppa, where they find the people too ashamed and frightened to come out into the streets until Perseus assures them of their safety. The women, when they see the hero, tell Andromeda that she is repaid for all her suffering by winning such a "godlike" man. The irony is clear; Andromeda, of course, had no choice about what was done to her and it was most likely that she would be killed. The women are trying to justify their behaviour, assuaging their own consciences rather than comforting the girl: Morris shows here a deep insight into human nature.

Perseus laughingly rebuffs the people's attempts to pay homage to him, reminding them that it was the gods who sent him (again,

indicating the influence of fate) and in particular that it was the Maid (Athene) who made him fearless. This is interesting because there is no mention of Athene's intervention in the actual rescue; yet Morris takes care to recall her granting courage to Perseus for the encounter with the Graiae. Moreover, there is a possibility of a double meaning in the line: 'the maid' (without the capital letter) would indicate Andromeda.

The concept of salvation is introduced in the description of the people rejoicing "for the slaying of their shame": they have been redeemed by Andromeda's rescue. Her parents, particularly her mother Cassiope, have also been redeemed, and when the king greets Perseus and his daughter, he offers the hero anything he wants as a reward; he even offers to set up a temple in Perseus' name. Perseus refuses saying that he does not wish to risk the enmity of the gods. He fears that

"... the God who now is friend to me

Thereby should come to be mine enemy."

The dramatic irony is obvious; it was the setting up of an altar to Andromeda which brought upon the people of Joppa the calamity they have only just escaped, yet no sooner as they delivered from that danger than they offer to repeat the mistake. Perseus is more prudent. The only reward he requests is Andromeda herself, whom he calls a "greater gift than power or gold". He too has been saved, in his case by the love of Andromeda brought "Unto his heart, a foolish void before."

The next morning the preparations for the wedding begin. Andromeda is awakened by her maids to "love and joyous shame". Her clothes for the ceremony are exceptionally beautiful, like "sunlight over blossoms fair", but their beauty is no match for her own. However, they are necessary to cover her body;

"Lest men should die from unfulfilled desire".

In a sense, Andromeda's beauty seems to be as dangerous as Medusa's. When the Gorgon's face is revealed, the spectator is killed by petrification, the complete loss of all sensation. When Andromeda's body is revealed, there is the danger that the spectator will be killed through an overabundance of sensation, desire. This explanation also

increases the sexual tension underlying the situation.

The marriage ceremony, like the rescue, is portrayed largely through Andromeda's eyes. It has an unreal, dream-like quality which is understandable after her narrow escape from a ghastly death. Even her joy cannot obliterate her memories: as she walks through the cheering crowds, she recalls her walk only the day before. The same people now cheering her were then treating her most cruelly. As has been noted, the ease with which people forget their own misdeeds is, for Morris, a particularly unpleasant aspect of human nature. The people of Joppa exemplify the worst weaknesses of humanity: they do not learn from their mistakes (offering to set up an altar to Perseus), they try to justify and then forget too quickly their own wrongdoings, they are willing to perpetrate the most cruel acts in order to save their own lives. In all these aspects Perseus is their opposite and he serves to show how man can achieve the "godlike" status to which he should aspire.

The ceremony is carried out in the pre^scribed way but its peace is shattered by the sudden arrival of Phineus. Morris's portrayal of Phineus is unusual. He is described as "great amidst great men". He is loved by his people and no coward. In fact he seems in every way worthy of Andromeda. Perseus' reaction to Phineus is dubious. He appears to mock him unnecessarily when he laughingly inquires who Phineus and his followers are; are they "but the servants of the King?" For a great leader, as we have been told Phineus is, this must be an insult, as the word "but" makes obvious. Phineus is overcome with rage and grief and, unable to speak, he reacts by throwing a spear at Perseus. The spear misses its target and kills instead a servant standing nearby.

After this violent outburst Phineus finds his voice and his speech makes it clear that he loves Andromeda dearly, so much that he prayed to marry her on his knees before Cepheus. His actions, therefore, appear to be prompted not merely by wounded pride but also by grief at the loss of his love. Cepheus replies by saying that, since it was Perseus who has saved his daughter's life, the least he can do as her

father is to give her to her saviour as a bride. At this point Perseus intervenes and prepares to draw the head from its bag. Before doing so, he gives Phineus' followers one last chance to make peace but they reject it. Note that in Morris's version Perseus makes no attempt to fight the men but uses the Gorgon's head straightaway.

The head does its terrible work and all Phineus' followers are turned to stone. Morris's love of detail emerges again when he explains, perhaps unnecessarily, that Cepheus' people withdraw behind Perseus so they are not smitten. He uses the simile of a shepherd on a hillside being struck by lightning while out in a thunderstorm to describe the way the head's power works upon the men. Once again, Morris uses sudden silence to dramatise the situation (as in the fight with the sea-monster):

"Then sank to silence all that storm of cries
And clashing arms; ... "

The description of the spear-points going out one by one is also most effective. The simile itself is perhaps over-extended, taking the reader too far away from the initial image of sudden terrible power to pictures of hares cowering from the storm and men afraid in their houses. However, it could be argued that these other images are as necessary as the one of the shepherd because they express the extent of Perseus' awesome power and underline the fear of those watching this demonstration of it.

After this act of revenge, Perseus surveys the presumably terrified crowd around him and casts over them "a kingly look". There is a strong hint of censure in this phrase, as Morris did not approve of one man having so much power and saw such power as dangerously easy to misuse. Perseus then tells Andromeda to forget what she has seen, presumably as he can himself. The disquiet felt by the reader about Perseus is strengthened as Morris describes how the scene ends:

" ... but right few words

Upon that night were said of king or lords."²¹

Even people as grateful for help as the inhabitants of Joppa are disturbed by such obvious exhibitions of unrestricted power. It seems clear,

temporarily at least, Perseus has fallen under the influence of the power given him by the Gorgon's head, just as in the Atlas episode.

The lovers are soon alone and forget everything else in their happiness. They even forget the gods, all that is except the god of love;

" ... whose bow

About the vexed and flowery earth doth go."

Even the happiest of scenes has a darker side (cf. Morris's treatment of April). The juxtaposition of "vexed" and "flowery" epitomises the two opposing aspects of life which are inextricably linked; the pleasure and the pain. Morris did not hold a simplistic view of the human condition. He was always aware of the suffering as well as the beauty²².

The story is taken to its conclusion, the death of Perseus, and then the Wanderers ponder upon its significance. At first they are depressed because it reminds them so forcefully of man's mortality: even a hero like Perseus dies in the end. Then they realise that there is some comfort to be found in the idea of the "godlike life" to which man, strengthened by virtue, can aspire and which can give some kind of immortality through fame. One of the greatest problems of living on the "vexed and flowery earth" is coming to terms with death. The fame gained through the living of an honourable life is, in fact, the only kind of immortality possible in a secular philosophy (Morris had lost his Christian faith quite early in his life).

The story of Perseus in The Earthly Paradise reflects the ambiguity of its setting in a world where there are no absolutes. Even the main character is liable to lapses of behaviour and prone to the temptations of, say, great power. It also illustrates Morris's deep sympathy for his fellow human beings (women no less than men). In the end, the tale offers some comfort to those, like the poet, who are haunted by the thought of death ("What use to find the Earthly Paradise itself, if there too roses faded and golden locks turned grey?" Lucas 146). Morris was a paradox, a practical dreamer and a realistic visionary. His poem is a mixture of romance and realism, make-believe and life.

NOTES

1. John Lemprière, A Classical Dictionary, first published 1788 and frequently reprinted with additions and alterations: for bibliographical details, see the introduction by F.A.Wright to his edition (London, 1949), especially pp. x-xi.
2. e.g. by Douglas Bush Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry 315; "If a source can be named for The Doom of King Acrisius, it is probably Apollodorus".
3. Burne-Jones does include this scene in his sequence of paintings. It is also described by Charles Kingsley in his famous book for children The Heroes, which may well have been Burne-Jones' source.
4. The meeting between Perseus and Athene undoubtedly contains many of the important elements of a Greek epiphany scene, examples of which are frequent in Homeric poetry and historical works such as Herodotus. The divine encounter is also a significant motif in the New Testament, in Luke's Gospel and Acts.

The essential elements of a Greek epiphany can be identified as follows:

- 1) The meeting occurs at a time of crisis in the life of the mortal (or his community).
- 2) The time and place are carefully specified. Favoured times of the day for such divine manifestations are the hours of dawn and dusk, midnight and midday. The place is normally denoted by precise reference to some land-mark. The meeting usually occurs on the road, the destination of the human encountered being specified.
- 3) The divinity asks a searching question, to which he already knows the answer. Often he betrays knowledge which a mortal could not possess.
- 4) The mortal does not recognise the divinity at first (sometimes with ironical effect).
- 5) The human participant shows fear and is often reassured by the divinity.
- 6) The god is often described as standing over the mortal.
- 7) Frequently there is a supernatural light, the sign of a divine presence.
- 8) The epiphant sometimes rebukes the mortal.
- 9) The epiphant often confers a gift or favour upon the mortal.
- 10) The epiphant disappears quickly as soon as the business of the encounter is completed.

For examples of these elements in the motif see Homer Iliad 24.349ff, Odyssey 7.14ff, Odyssey 13.219ff, Hesiod Theogony 22ff, Herodotus 6.105, Luke 2.8f, Luke 24.13f, Acts 8.26f.

A reading of the divine encounter between Perseus and Athene shows many of these elements to be present. Athene is at first disguised and Perseus does not recognise her. She asks him what he is doing, although she knows. She also asks the searching question about Perseus' intentions if he were to find Medusa.

The time and place of their encounter are specified (dusk, on the sea-shore). Athene's real identity is suddenly revealed in a blaze of light, causing Perseus to be afraid. She stands over him and reassures him. She also bestows upon him a great gift to aid his quest. As soon as her instructions are given, the goddess disappears. There is no doubt that this is an epiphany in the Classical tradition: it testifies to Morris' intimate familiarity with the motifs of Greek and Latin poetry.

For further information regarding epiphanies see Pfister's article in R.E. S.4.277-323, Pax in R.L.A.C. 5.832-909, Archibald Cameron "The form of the Thalysia" Miscellanea Rostagni (Turin 1963) 291-307, F. Williams "Scenes of Encounter in Homer and Theocritus" Mus. Phil. Lond. 3, (1978) 219-225 and "A Theophany in Theocritus" C.Q. 21 (1971) 137-145.

5. This description is not compatible with the Apollodorus' description of the Gorgons, for example, or with the Greek vase-paintings in the British Museum at the time, paintings which we know Burne-Jones studied (Chap.2.n.9) and which were probably known to Morris.
6. Ovid tells the story of Niobe at M.6.145ff: for Niobe turned to stone but still weeping silently v. lines 301ff.
7. Beautiful ankles are a characteristic which she shares with Danaë, Perseus' mother, for example. Homer describes Danaë as καλλίσφυρος at Il. 14. 319; " ... Δανάης καλλισφύρου 'Ακρισιώνης"
8. Much earlier in the poem, Morris has related this story in full through the person of King Polydectes, who tells of Medusa's fate at the banquet when he sends Perseus off to kill her.
9. The emphasis on the importance of fate in the Atlas episode is interesting because of the parallel notion of the prophecy introduced by Ovid; no matter what Atlas does, he cannot escape his doom.
10. The intensely pictorial nature of Morris's interpretation of this scene is a quality shared by Gerard Manley Hopkins' sonnet "Andromeda". The poem is only concerned with the moment before the rescue. It has been the object of many allegorical interpretations (Andromeda as the Church, Perseus as Christ) but a simpler reading is defended by John Wain in Essays on Literature and Ideas (127f);

"If all he (Hopkins) wanted to convey was that the Church was in a difficult position in 1879, but still had a mighty rescuer to look to, surely he might have said so straight out? Personally, I would rather get my illumination from that rejoinder of Rimbaud's, 'It means what it says'. Hopkins is giving us a picture, and a picture is irreducible. What does the picture show? A girl, fast bound, on a rocky promontory, menaced by a dragon; a rescuer close at hand; a scene of urgent peril and yet also of patience and courage".

11. cf. Catullus 64. 63-7:
 "non flavo retinens subtilē vertice mītram,
 non contecta levi velatum pectus amictu,
 non teretis trophio lactentis vincta papillas,
 omnia quae toto delapsa e corpore passim
 ipsius ante pedes fluctus salis adludebant."

12. e.g. Lionel Stevenson The Pre-Raphaelite Poets (N. Carolina 1972)
 130 declares that Morris "appears to have been devoid of sexual
 passion, and regarded women according to the conventions of the
 medieval Court of Love rather than as human beings." This is
 surprising in view of the erotic element in Morris's descriptions
 of such scenes as Danaë's seduction, Perseus' encounter with
 Andromeda or Pygmalion's with his living statue; note also
 the care that Morris takes to portray figures like Andromeda
 or even Medusa realistically (cf. Ovid).

13. Morris seems to have presented Perseus through Andromeda's
 eyes as a reflection of the way she sees him (the god-like
 appearance, the flushed face) and now that mirror image is
 contrasted with another, her personal picture of the sea-monster.
 The "harmless fire" in Perseus' hair is a classicism cf. Virgil
 A.2. 683f. " ... tactuque innoxia mollis
 lambere flamma comas ... "

14. It seems far more likely that Burne-Jones got his inspiration
 for the painting of Perseus enfolded in the serpent from this
 poetic detail rather than from a Celtic initial as Löcher 40
 suggests.

15. The reference to a "new life" recalls the story of Pygmalion's
 statue. Andromeda has come back from the dead and is therefore
 effectively new-born. The statue is brought into the world
 for the first time by Pygmalion's prayer so, although physically
 adult, she is mentally new-born.

16. There are two versions of this story, one in which Cassiope
 boasts of her own beauty and another in which she boasts of her
 daughter's. Ovid seems to have followed the former version
 although he is very ambiguous (M.4. 670-71). Apollodorus and
 Lemprière clearly adhere to this first variation; Morris chose
 the second. It seems likely that he took this detail from
 Kingsley's The Heroes.

17. The exchange of living girl for stone statue again recalls the
 story of Pygmalion. Instead of the change from flesh to stone
 being symbolic of the girl's death, in the Pygmalion legend the
 sequence is reversed and the statue brought to life.

18. This painting ("Icarus") is the subject of a poem by W.H.Auden.
 In it he exploits fully the concept of personal disaster which
 has no effect on those around because it is not they who are
 suffering.

19. It also recalls the ancient Greek maxim that no man can be called happy until he is dead, as in the story of Solon and Croesus (Herodotus 1.30-33).

20. Man is seen as being strapped to a great wheel which is turned at random by a female figure, Fortune. At one moment he can be at the top of the wheel but suddenly, with a single turn, he can be plunged to the bottom. He has no control at all over the movements of the wheel. The Wheel of Fortune is also the subject of a painting by Burne-Jones.

The image of the wheel is an ancient one. According to H.V.Canter "Fortuna in Latin Poetry" (Studies in Philology 19 { 1922}) 77 it first occurs in Latin literature during the Ciceronian age (Cicero In Pisonem 22 "Fortunae rotam pertimescebat"). Fortune is also associated with a ball or globe but this image occurs most often in Greek authors and disappears after the third century B.C.

21. The lines immediately before these refer to Andromeda's smile as she is reassured by her lover;

"And in her cheeks within a little while
Sweet colour came again, ... "

Morris' use of the word "but" therefore clearly separates the image of the lovers from the reference to the silence about kings and lords. This silence is not just because lovers on their wedding night talk of other things; everyone in the hall is silent because of what they have seen. The wedding night is then dealt with in the lines following;

"But soon again the lovers were alone
Of all the sons of men remembering none,
Forgetting every god but him whose bow
About the vexed and flowery earth doth go."

22. F.L.Lucas Eight Victorian Poets (Cambridge 1930) 160;

"Between the fireside glitter of societies like Pope's
and the sun-blinded vapours of souls like Shelley's, lies
a middle sphere. In it are found reason without
insensitiveness and imagination without unreality, sense
without hardness and deep feeling without sentiment; in
it the greatest name is Shakespeare, and far from the
least is William Morris."

Three Interpretations Compared

It is to be expected that the interpretations of Burne-Jones and Morris, though in different mediums should share many common characteristics. The influence of Ovid upon the two has not, however, previously been acknowledged, although there is sufficient proof to indicate that it was significant.

Although Burne-Jones originally intended his Perseus Cycle to illustrate the story in The Earthly Paradise, it is clear that the project evolved during preparation so that the resulting series of paintings is often significantly different to the scenes described in the poem. Burne-Jones' list of intended subjects for the series (Sketchbook No. 1070.2 page 77v.), which closely follows Morris's narrative, is too long to be practicable. Evidently he then selected those episodes of the legend which appealed to him most and concentrated on illustrating these (he did paint a version of Danaë and the brazen tower but quite separately from this cycle). Once he had begun his work, Burne-Jones seems to have set his friend's poem aside and used his own knowledge and experience to shape the material. We know that he was most thorough in his preparation for a picture and spent much time on research beforehand¹. He also had a great love for and knowledge of the classics. There is therefore every reason to assume that Burne-Jones was influenced by other versions of the story known to him as well as Morris's. Ovid covers the whole of the legend of Perseus briefly, although the birth-story is mentioned only when the hero introduces himself to Andromeda's parents. Burne-Jones makes no attempt to do the same and seems to have disregarded the birth-story and the tale after the marriage to Andromeda. We know that he had intended to include the Phineus episode. However, only very rough sketches exist and this section also seems to have been readily abandoned. William Morris narrates the entire legend, even including Perseus' own death. He gives his version the title "The Doom of King Acrisius", which seems to imply that Acrisius, not Perseus, is the main character. However, a careful reading of the poem suggests that the doom (i.e. fatum) of King Acrisius actually is Perseus, his eventual slayer.

We have seen how inventive and original Ovid was in his telling of Perseus' story, particularly in the Atlas episode which he created out of two separate legends. He also included several little-known details in his narrative, such as the reason for Medusa's punishment and the birth of Chrysaor and Pegasus. The use of original Ovidian material must denote Ovidian influence. This is particularly important in the Atlas episode because Apollodorus, who is often assumed to be the source for Morris and Burne-Jones, does not mention the giant's fate. However, both Morris and Burne-Jones do include Atlas in their interpretations, although their treatment of the material is somewhat different.

Morris cannot have used Ovid as a source for the whole of his poem. However, there are certainly sufficient similarities in the episodes common to both to support the notion of Ovidian influence in those parts. Although in his version of the Atlas episode Morris does not mention the prophecy concerning the giant's golden apples (another Ovidian innovation), he does seem to have transferred the motif to the episode of the meeting with the Graiae. They mention that they have been warned of Perseus' coming, a detail not found elsewhere². Morris also seems to have elaborated upon the implied injustice of Medusa's punishment which is suggested in the Ovidian narrative. He describes at length the Gorgon's state of mind and emphasises the horror of her fate. The reason for Medusa's punishment would also have come from Ovid.

Apart from the similarity of certain events, Ovid's influence can also be seen in the way in which Morris chooses to describe various episodes. This is particularly apparent in the Andromeda story. The similarity begins when Perseus first sees Andromeda. Both poets emphasise the suddenness of his love and how it paralyzes him, though Ovid's treatment is more humorous than Morris's. Ovid explains that Perseus is so amazed at Andromeda's beauty that he almost forgets to flap the wings on his sandals:

"et stupet et visae correptus imagine formae
paene suas quater est oblitus in aere pennas" (M.4.676-7)

Morris is more sentimental and explains instead how Perseus cannot speak for love of the girl;

"But sudden love his heart did so constrain,
With open mouth he strove to speak in vain
And from his heart the hot tears 'gan to rise "

Another parallel occurs in the actual description of Andromeda as she stands chained to the rock. Ovid's portrayal of her as frozen and statue-like is memorable; one of the most skilful details is his comment that Perseus would have thought her a statue, if the wind had not been stirring her hair and the tears falling down her face:

"quam simul ad duras religatam bracchia cautes
vidit Abantiades, nisi quod levis aura capillos
moverat et tepido manebant lūmina fletu,
marmoreum ratus esset opus ... " (M.4. 672-675)

Morris takes up the detail of the hair moving in the breeze to emphasise her nakedness and also as a reflection of the chains around her limbs:

"And found a woman standing lonely there,
Naked, except for tresses of her hair
That o'er her white limbs by the breeze were wound,
And brazen chains her weary arms that bound
Unto the sea-beat overhanging rock "

One of the clearest examples of Morris's debt to Ovid occurs when Perseus reveals himself to Andromeda. Ovid humorously describes how Andromeda, completely naked, attempts to hide her face from her rescuer but cannot because of her chains:

"... primo silet illa nec audet
adpellare virum virgo, manibus^{que} modestos
celasset vultus, si non religata fuisset " (M.4. 681-3)

Her efforts are of course futile. By including the word "modestos" and adding the "si" clause, Ovid manages to make the gesture amusing without deriding the girl (admittedly, however, a more straightforward interpretation could be argued).

Morris does not have Ovid's sense of humour so, although he

reproduces the description of her action, he does so very seriously.

"But she, all rigid with her first surprise,
Ceasing her wailing as she heard his cry,
Stared at him, dumb with fear and misery,
Shrunk closer yet unto the rocky place
And writhed her bound hands as to hide her face;"

By emphasising Andromeda's terror and misery, her inability to speak and by using the word "writhed" with its implications of desperation and pain, Morris creates a quite different impression with exactly the same gesture. There is nothing to provoke a smile here.

When Andromeda has failed to hide her face, Ovid describes how Perseus persistently questions her about her origins. Although modesty prevents her from responding at first, eventually she does give some reply; she is afraid that otherwise he will believe her plight to be the result of some crime she has committed. Again, Ovid treats the episode in a humorous way, apparently parodying the conventions of Homeric epic in the questions Perseus asks.

Morris borrows the notion but locates it in a different part of his narrative, after the monster has been defeated and Andromeda has seen the Gorgon's head in the sea-pool. As one might expect, his treatment of the motif is by no means amusing. He is more specific than Ovid; Andromeda's fear is that Perseus will believe her to be a sorceress, being punished for some wicked deed (there is perhaps something medieval rather than classical in the reference to a sorceress).

Ovid's Andromeda eventually explains her background because she fears Perseus will think her guilty of something wicked; Morris's Andromeda falls prey to the same fear for the very reason that he does not question her about herself. Thus Ovid's remark:

"saepius instanti, sua ne delicta fateri
nolle videretur, nomen terraeque suumque,
quantaque maternae fuerit fiducia formae,
indicat, ... " (M.4. 685-7)

becomes in Morris's version:

"O godlike man, thou dost not ask my name,
Or why folk gave me up to death and shame;
Dost thou not dread I am some sorceress,
Whose evil deeds well earned me that distress?"

The notion, though inverted, is clearly Ovidian (an allusion by variation is the normal pattern of imitation in antiquity cf. Giangrande "Arte Allusiva and Alexandrian Epic Poetry" C.Q. 17 {1967} 85-97).

Ovid completes his tale of Andromeda's rescue with the aetiology of the coral (aetiologies normally have this coda-form). He claims that the stone-like quality of coral originated from the fact that Perseus rested Medusa's head on a bed of it while setting up the three altars to the gods who had aided him. Morris by no means reproduces this little story but he does explicitly mention Perseus' lifting of the head from the sand, for no apparent reason. He does not describe its setting down and, on close examination of the events immediately before, it is quite difficult to understand when this might have happened. Indeed, Perseus has just shown Andromeda the head so one would expect it still to be in his hand. This seems to be an example of contamination by the Ovidian original.

Although not as exact as previous examples, there are two more points of similarity within the Andromeda story to be mentioned. Ovid has been accused of giving a circus-like air to the scene on the shore by introducing Andromeda's parents into it and by having the death of the monster greeted with tumultuous applause from both men and gods (Bömer 214). The effect may be rather startling (the reader has inevitably assumed that the young lovers are alone until Cassiope and Cepheus are suddenly described as clinging to their daughter and weeping) but it certainly reminds the reader that there is an outside world, beyond the immediate scene.

Morris too strives to remind us of this fact, though in a less surprising way. He prepares his readers by mentioning the tower with "pale haggard faces" at its windows before Perseus even sees Andromeda. Instead of sudden applause which breaks out when the danger is over,

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Morris introduces a "dismal trumpet-blast" and answering wails when the danger is beginning and the monster approaching. Both Ovid's applause and Morris's trumpet-blast remind us of the world beyond the lovers. However, while Ovid expresses the joy and relief of those watching after the situation has been saved, Morris emphasises the fear and unhappiness before that relief.

Perseus' attitude towards Andromeda is also similar in both cases. Ovid emphasises the way Perseus takes his bride without a dowry, although offered one. He carefully describes Andromeda as both cause of and reward for Perseus' great deed. Morris takes up this notion. His Perseus also rejects a dowry, though offered, and calls his bride-to-be "a greater gift than power or gold". However, there is a significant difference in the way in which the two poets build upon this idea.

Morris constantly emphasises Andromeda's humanity. He frequently narrates the story from her point of view (especially the two episodes which most concern her, the rescue and the marriage) and the reader is very sympathetic towards her. As Andromeda is thus well-established as an individual, there is no danger of her being seen merely as an object to be given away to Perseus. Clearly she wants to be married to her saviour. However, in Ovid there is no firm indication of her feelings. As a result, when he describes her as "pretiumque et causa laboris" (M.4. 739) she appears to be being treated like a medal or a gold cup, not a person. Whether portrayed as a person or an object, however, Andromeda's significance is the same in both poets. She represents the ultimate level of human achievement to which Perseus has aspired and which he has attained through his love for her.

Although most of the explicit parallels between Ovid and Morris occur within the Andromeda episode, there are also several good examples in other parts of the poem. For instance, some of the events at the beginning of Perseus' encounter with Phineus are apparently borrowed from the Metamorphoses. Ovid's account of the confrontation between the two suitors is, of course, most memorable because it parodies

the "blood and thunder" of traditional epic so well. Morris makes no attempt to imitate this, not even allowing the two to come to blows (Perseus simply uses the Gorgon's head). However, he does borrow two striking details from the first moments of the encounter and works them into his own version.

The first detail is the description of Phineus as speechless, unable to reply to Perseus (in Morris) or Cepheus (in Ovid). Instead he resorts to violence and throws a weapon at his rival. However, his aim is not true. In Ovid, Perseus then throws the weapon back and accidentally kills a by-stander, Rhoetus. Morris conflates the two events and describes how Phineus' weapon kills a servant nearby. His use of the details in Ovid is particularly noticeable because there is so little other physical violence in his version of the whole episode.

Ovid describes the events as follows:

"ille nihil contra, sed et hunc et Persea vultu
alterno spectans petat hunc ignorat an illum ,
cunctatusque brevi contortam viribus hastam,
quantas ira dabat, nequiquam in Persea misit.
ut stetit illa toro, stratis tum denique Perseus
exsiluit teloque ferox inimica remisso
pectora rupisset, nisi post altaria Phineus,
isset: et (indignum) scelerato profuit ara.
fronte tamen Rhoeti non inrita cuspis adhaesit,
qui postquam cecidit ferrumque ex osse revulsum est,
calcitrat et positas adspergit sanguine mensas." (M.5. 30-40)

Morris, although less bloodthirsty, describes the same pent-up anger and consequent explosion into violence:

"Then inarticulate with rage and grief
Phineus turned on him, snatching at a sheaf
Of darts that hung against a pillar there,
And hurled one at him, that sung through his hair
And slew a serving varlet by his side "

Cepheus' speech to his would-be son-in-law also contains

elements common to both poets. Ovid's Cepheus is altogether more dignified than Morris's and speaks at greater length before making a strategic withdrawal from the hall. Morris portrays Cepheus as more openly afraid and ineffectual but his speech contains the same basic argument as in Ovid to persuade Phineus of the rightness of Perseus' claim to Andromeda. In both versions Cepheus points out that Perseus saved Andromeda's life and could therefore have done more or less as he wished with her whereas Phineus would not risk his life for her.

There is a strong feeling in both cases that Cepheus is very grateful that Perseus has chosen to marry the girl honourably, although this is made more explicit in Morris:

" ... the man did save her life,
And her he might have made his slave, as wife
He asks for now ... "

Ovid's Cepheus tries to be more diplomatic, explaining that Andromeda has been given to Perseus, not in preference to Phineus himself but in preference to death:-

"nunc sine, qui petiit, per quem haec non orba senectus,
ferre, quod et meritis et voce est pactus, eumque
non tibi, sed certae praelatum intellege morti! " (M.5. 27-29)

However, the underlying message is clearly the same as in Morris; Cepheus cannot do other than give Andromeda to Perseus.

We have already seen the way in which Morris takes up Ovidian details and transposes them to other parts of his poem. Another example of this occurs when Morris describes how Perseus delights in the downfall of Atlas. This unpleasant episode, which reflects so badly on the character of Perseus, echoes Ovid's description of how Perseus mocks another defeated enemy, Phineus. Here also Perseus' status as "hero" is diminished by his behaviour. Morris's Perseus mocks Atlas almost childishly (typical heroic behaviour, in fact. Morris seems to be making a complex comment on the whole heroic code here):

" 'O King! when such a gift I bring to thee,
Wilt thou be dumb and neither hear nor see?
Listen how sing thy men, and in thy hall
How swift the merry dancers' feet do fall! "

The "gift" is, of course, Medusa's head. Morris reiterates this cruel gloating later when Perseus awakes and sees his enemy!

"There all the night in dreamless sleep he lay,
But rose again at the first streak of day,
And looking round about rejoiced to see
The uncouth image of his enemy,
Silent for ever, with wide mouth agape
E'en as he died ... "

Ovid's Perseus also takes a disturbing pleasure in the total submission of his enemy and has the grotesque notion of using the stone figure of Phineus to remind Andromeda what sort of a man she might have married. He also pretends to be giving his enemy something, the gift being a view of the Gorgon's head.

" ... 'quod' ait, 'timidissime Phineu,
et possum tribuisse et magnum est munus inertī, -
pone metum! - tribuam: nullo violabere ferro.
quin etiam mansura dabo monumenta per aevum,
inque domo soceri semper spectabere nostri,
ut mea se sponsi soletur imagine coniunx' " (M.5. 224-229)

Another example of the transference of detail from one episode to another is seen in Morris's description of the landscape around Medusa's abode. He portrays the land as infested with snakes; Perseus sees birds carrying serpents in their talons and a stream seething with snakes. The notion of infestation also occurs in Ovid, when he describes Perseus flying over Libya. Here blood dripping from the severed head of the Gorgon falls on the ground and becomes serpents. Morris does not explain the origins of the snakes as Ovid does, apparently relying on Medusa's proximity as sufficient reason for their presence. However, the motif seems to be the same.³

There is, then, abundant evidence that Morris made extensive and detailed use of Ovid as a source for his Perseus story. As Burne-Jones, in turn, used his friend's poem, the transmission of certain influences is inevitable. However, a more interesting aspect of

Burne-Jones' work is the number of instances when he turns away from Morris and apparently returns to the classical sources, particularly Ovid. His cycle of paintings developed far beyond mere illustration; nothing makes this process clearer than the inclusion of two scenes which are not even mentioned by Morris and do not appear on Burne-Jones' original list of subjects (Sketchbook No. 1070.2 page 77v.). The two scenes in question are "Perseus in the Garden of the Nymphs" and "The Birth of Pegasus and Chrysaor from the blood of Medusa".

It seems likely that the painter drew his inspiration for the scene with the Nymphs from Apollodorus, who also mentions the birth of Pegasus and Chrysaor. However, as Burne-Jones also includes an Atlas scene which, as we shall see, is quite unlike that of Morris, it is equally possible that he derived his picture of Pegasus and Chrysaor from a reading of Ovid, to whom he must have referred for the Atlas story. Moreover, although Burne-Jones includes a scene showing the Nymphs giving Perseus the helmet, sandals and kibisis, he also portrays Athene arming the hero with sword and mirror, an episode not mentioned at all by Apollodorus. In fact, in Apollodorus it is Hermes who gives Perseus an adamantine sickle as a weapon. The influence of Apollodorus would seem, therefore, to be very slight.

The picture which seems best to illustrate Ovid's influence is "Atlas turned to stone". The very inclusion of the Atlas episode shows a debt to Ovid and a close examination of Burne-Jones' painting indicates that it owes little to Morris's interpretation of the scene. Atlas is shown in the painting as beautifully formed, clean-shaven and fair, quite unlike Morris's dark, bearded giant. There is no silver hall, only a background of sky and valleys. The expression on Atlas' face is sad, reproachful and full of longing as he stares after the departing Perseus. All in all, there is nothing corresponding to Morris's description:

"The uncouth image of his enemy,
Silent for ever, with wide mouth agape."

The most important feature of the painting, however, is the

sphere balanced on Atlas' shoulders. Morris makes no mention of this part of the legend (that Atlas had to carry the heavens on his shoulders) but Ovid does and Burne-Jones seems to have interpreted his words literally. Ovid describes it thus:

"... tum partes altus in omnes
crevit in immensum (sic di statuistis), et omne
cum tot sideribus caelum requievit in illo" (M.4. 660-1)

In the painting the giant does indeed carry all the stars on his back. The constellations of the zodiac are clearly recognisable, represented as figures rather than star formations. There is a crab, a centuar, a water-bearer, a lion and a maiden. Lemprière's entry for the story does not mention this detail so it seems certain that Burne-Jones borrowed the image from Ovid's poetry. Moreover, the sad fatalism on Atlas' face in the painting is far more in keeping with the Ovidian Atlas, doomed by the oracle despite all his efforts to avoid his fate, than the Morris character, so churlish and full of mindless violence.

Another painting which deviates in part from the Morris poem it purports to illustrate but bears several similarities to Ovid's description of the scene is "Perseus slaying the Serpent". The picture concentrates upon the three figures of Andromeda, Perseus and the sea-monster; there is no background, apart from the immediate surroundings of rocks and sea. However, there is clearly no sand at Andromeda's feet, much less the pile of clothes which Morris describes.

The serpent is also different to that described by Morris. This is a smooth reptile, not a "huge mass ... maned with grey tufts of hair". It has much more in common with Ovid's monster (whose appearance is indicated in the simile of the eagle swooping on the snake) than with Morris's "nameless horror". Perseus is fighting the beast in the sea, as in Ovid, not on the sand, as in Morris. Note also that the creature appears to have a fish-like tail, the beginnings of which are clear although it is mostly obscured by a rock. This detail is not mentioned by Morris but does appear in Ovid, when Perseus is actually fighting the serpent:

"... nunc qua tenuissima cauda
desinit in piscem, falcato verberat ense." (M. 4. 726-7)

It would appear, therefore, that Burne-Jones took his portrayal of the sea-monster and, to some extent, the background from Ovid rather than Morris (Perino del Vaga's depiction may have influenced the background). The actual pose, Perseus entwined in the creature, however undoubtedly shows Morris's influence.

The last painting in the sequence, "Perseus and his Bride" is a strange composition which seems to owe little to any source other than Burne-Jones' imagination. The scene apparently has its origins in Morris's description of Perseus showing Medusa's head to Andromeda in a rock-pool after the battle with the sea-serpent. However, Burne-Jones' version bears little resemblance to this.

He sets the event in a lush, walled garden (a kind of paradise) with an apple-tree in the background. There Perseus holds the head over a small pool of water enclosed in what looks like a font. Although Christian allegories can be drawn from the scene, the setting seems also to recall the Atlas story. Ovid explains that Atlas had a golden apple-tree enclosed in a garden and guarded by a serpent. It is this tree that he feared Perseus had come to rob⁴. It seems more than coincidental, therefore, that Burne-Jones should also portray a walled garden and an apple-tree (with golden apples); it is likely that he has transposed the material from the Atlas episode to this final scene. The painting is an excellent example of the way the artist uses material from his sources in a manner all his own in order to create a totally original work.

It is relatively easy to point out the borrowing of details of description or events from Ovid. It is more difficult but equally important to emphasise affinities of style and interpretation, particularly between Ovid and Burne-Jones, who worked in different mediums. The unusual technique Burne-Jones employs in "Perseus and the Graiae" to convey a sense of age has already been noted. Ignoring Morris's detailed description of the women, the painter instead transfers the wrinkles and folds expected on their faces to the surrounding landscape and to their clothes. Using the background to play an active part in

the story is not a feature exclusively of Burne-Jones' style. Ovid also uses background as a fundamental part of the concept of metamorphosis⁵. One of the most striking examples of this occurs not in the Perseus episode but in the Salmacis story shortly before (M.4. 288ff). Here Ovid merges the identity of the nymph with her pool, also named Salmacis, so that one is never sure where one ends and the other begins, an essential feature in the light of the eventual outcome of the tale⁶. Salmacis' soft, disarming and seductive charm is also her pool's; both prove dangerous for the unfortunate Hermaphroditus.

There is another example of this use of background within the Perseus episode itself, although it is not as extended as that in the Salmacis story. Perseus is approaching the land of the Gorgons. Ovid describes the landscape around their lair in a way which reflects the physical attributes of Medusa, giving his audience a strong sense of her presence before she is actually seen (cf. also the dwellings of Invidia and Somnus). Her social isolation is emphasised in the isolation of her dwelling-place. The ground "bristles" with trees as her head "bristles" with snakes. Everywhere there are statues of her victims, reminders of her power, and even the land is hard and stony. Medusa's home reflects her qualities in the same way that the background to "Perseus and the Graiae" reflects the women's age.

A more direct example of the personality being merged with the physical landscape is, of course, the metamorphosis of Atlas. The giant becomes a mountain, and each of his physical properties reappears in this new form:

"quantus erat, mons factus Atlas; nam barba comaeque
in silvas abeunt, iuga sunt umerique manusque,
quod caput ante fuit, summo est in monte cacumen,
ossa lapis fiunt ... " (M.4. 657-660)

Here Ovid has taken the process to its extreme and, instead of the landscape being simply a reflection of and comment upon the personality, the landscape and the person have become one.

A striking aspect of Ovid's poetic skill is his ability to

make his audience accept the miraculous events he describes. One of the reasons for this seems to be the detailed realism of his description. The Metamorphoses contain an inherent paradox; most of the events narrated in the poem defy the laws of nature yet for them to be convincing rather than ludicrous the poet has to portray them as naturalistically as possible. He follows the procedure once formulated by Walt Disney for making the impossible credible; only one natural law at a time is suspended. To this end, he creates detailed pictures of woods and pools which are convincing as real woods and pools, then describes an incident there which is quite amazing.⁷ He explains in detail the process of metamorphosis⁸ (the process often carries on the implications of previous behaviour e.g. Lycaon, Arachne, Aesacus, Daedalion). He fills the strangest settings with details from real life⁹, gives mythical personages genuine personalities and human traits.

This realistic portrayal of the fantastic and imaginary is a quality shared by Burne-Jones who shunned the social realism of men like Holman Hunt in favour of an imaginary world which was yet filled with details from reality. For example, he made many studies of birds' wings in preparation for painting those of the Gorgons and Perseus' sandals. He and his son Philip spent many hours constructing helmets and armour so he could paint these objects from life, yet they made little attempt to be historically accurate in their designs.

Such preoccupation with detail, which is also shared by Morris, has a negative aspect as well, of course. There are many occasions in the Metamorphoses when Ovid seems merely to be adding details for their own sake (see the discussion of his version of the Perseus legend, Chapter 1). The result can be distracting. Morris also does this on occasion (for example, Athene's detailed explanation why she could not herself tell Perseus where the Gorgons lived). Burne-Jones, perhaps with the example of the Pre-Raphaelites in mind, was well aware of the danger of overworking a picture and putting in so much detail that the overall effect is spoiled (as shown by his remarks about the Andromeda painting, G.B-J Memorials Vol.2, 68).

Burne-Jones and Ovid are similar in their elusiveness and ambiguity. Each has a tendency to lead their audience on, to give hints and clues but reach no definite conclusion. Burne-Jones constantly reminds his audience of the existence of a world beyond the painting. He fills the background with open doors, windows and arches or half-glimpsed scenes. He puts towns, woods or streets in the distance, tantalising the spectator because they are just out of reach.

Similarly, Ovid leads his reader to believe that he is trying to convey one particular interpretation of a story, then changes the focus. An obvious example of this occurs in Book 10. The Pygmalion story, generally accepted as being a tale of piety rewarded, is immediately followed by the story of Myrrha, Pygmalion's great-granddaughter. Gradually the audience remembers that Pygmalion's statue was his creation, in a sense his daughter. A new light is cast on Myrrha's predicament. Why is it so unacceptable for her to love her father when Pygmalion has actually been rewarded for his passion for his statue? The juxtaposition of the tales is sufficient to arouse uncertainty as to Ovid's intentions but the uncertainty is never resolved.

A similar situation appears in Book 1 in the Lycaon story, seemingly a straightforward case of terrible impiety which is punished. Yet there are inconsistencies in Jupiter's narration of the events during his stay in Lycaon's palace. If Lycaon planned to kill the god, why bother to try to serve him human flesh? Moreover, the juxtaposition of the story of Lycaon's impiety towards Jupiter and the destruction of the whole world inevitably gives the impression that the one is the result of the other. Somehow Jupiter's act of righteous anger is undermined; instead it appears as a cruel act of personal revenge. Ovid creates enough doubt and uncertainty to give the story a sense of ambivalence. He also plays with recurring objects so that they seem to have the force of symbols but their meaning is hidden (see, for example, the recurring motif of the snake in Books 3 and 4).

Such ambiguity is not an obvious feature of Morris's work. Presumably his political convictions enabled him to be more definite

in his intentions. However, even he seems doubtful and elusive at times, striving as he says in "The Apology" to The Earthly Paradise only "to build a shadowy isle of bliss" and calling himself merely "the poor singer of an empty day".

The general theme of all three versions discussed here seems remarkably similar. All three artists have, in differing degrees, portrayed the tale as one of salvation and the ability of true love to raise man above the normal level of human existence. Ovid rearranges the narrative order of the whole story so that the rescue of Andromeda occupies the centre. Burne-Jones stops the forward movement of his paintings at the lovers' meeting. Morris actually has Perseus declare that his love for Andromeda has changed his heart from "a foolish void". There are several permutations of the notion of salvation in the story. Perseus is saved and made "godlike" by his love for Andromeda; she is saved from the monster (again, by Perseus' love). The town is saved from the serpent and from the crime of sacrificing the innocent girl. Cassiope is saved from having her beloved child's blood on her hands.

Linked to the theme of salvation is that of the power of fate. Elsewhere in the Metamorphoses¹⁰ Ovid shows how fate is even more powerful than the gods, the ultimate ruling force in the world. His invention of an oracle in the Atlas episode emphasises the role of fate in the story and the way it cannot be avoided¹¹. Burne-Jones also felt the power of fate to be strong and conveyed this in the faces of his figures, so full of yearning and resignation at the same time. The presence of fate as a guiding force is, however, made most explicit in Morris's poetry. He recurs to this theme constantly and his Perseus acknowledges fully the part fate plays in his finding and rescue of Andromeda.

There are, of course, many great differences between the three artists; neither Burne-Jones nor Morris possess Ovid's sense of humour, for example. It may also be argued that one cannot make a genuine stylistic comparison between a poem and a painting. However, Burne-Jones himself apparently would have disagreed. In Memorials Vol.2,264,

his wife reports him as declaring:

"Why literature is only literature because it is art, and for no other reason. It is art that makes paintings pictures, and it is art that makes verses poems."

In his view, then, to compare a painting and a poem is merely to compare art with art (a very old and classical point of view, cf. Horace Ars Poetica). Certainly the polished, highly-wrought finish of a Burne-Jones picture corresponds to the polished, stylish language of an Ovidian poem¹³. The evidence shows that Ovid's story of Perseus did affect the work of both Burne-Jones and Morris; both derived the subject-matter for whole scenes and details within scenes from Ovid. Moreover, all three present a remarkably similar view of the significance of the legend.

NOTES

1. Apart from the enormous number of preliminary sketches and designs which exist, (see Löcher) there is ample evidence of Burne-Jones' careful preparations for the series in the writings of his wife. In Memorials, she describes how he made endless studies of armour for the Perseus paintings: "Sir Coutts Lindsay had a fine collection of old armour from which Edward made drawings, and in addition to this, with the help of Mr. Benson he designed many pieces himself, expressly in order to lift them out of association with any historical time." (Vol.2, 145-6). She also describes how he engineered an introduction to a young lady in the audience at the Albert Hall one day because her head was the sort he wanted for the Perseus series (Vol. 2, 80-81). This sort of care was given to all his work and he often spent many years on a single project (The Perseus Cycle, for example, took fifteen years and was still not completed). Georgiana Burne-Jones records him as exclaiming once, "I thank the Lord in heaven that he gave me a savage passion for work" (Vol.2, 6).
2. Morris is known to have transferred ideas in this way elsewhere. For example, in "Atalanta's Race", he picks up the Ovidian notion that Atalanta urges the hero not to try to win her because she is moved by his youth and by a feeling which the audience realises is love. However, instead of Atalanta, in Morris's version it is the king who urges withdrawal from the race. Moreover, although Atalanta does not actually beg her admirer not to compete, it is love rather than desire for the golden apples which makes her lose the contest.
3. Morris does not mention the infestation of Libya although it was a detail which must have been well-known, being included in Charles Kingsley's version of the tale in The Heroes (Lucan Bellum Civile 9 also describes the infestation in detail). However, he does locate Atlas' palace "on some Libyan plain".
4. "arboreae frondes auro radiante nitentes
ex auro ramos, ex auro poma tegebant." (M.4. 637-8)

"id metuens solidis pomaria clauserat Atlas
moenibus et vasto dederat servanda draconi
arcebatque suis externos finibus omnes." (M.4. 646-8)
5. The role which landscape plays in Ovid's poetry is treated in Charles Segal's monograph Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses (Hermes Einzelschriften 23, 1969). As well as discussing at length the symbolic meaning of various aspects of landscape, he makes interesting points about how the landscape itself is capable of metamorphosis. With regard to the Salmacis story, for example, he says; "The fact that water is a symbol not only of virginity, but also of sexuality may enhance a psychological ambivalence inherent in the myth. ...

This shift in the symbolism of water from one condition to its opposite, from purity to sexuality and from peace to violence,

also reinforces the instability and uncertainty which are general characteristics of the world of the Metamorphoses. The landscape symbolical of virginity may thus suddenly become the landscape of lustful sensuality; images of sanctity may become images of desire". (24-25). Unfortunately, Segal seems to be misled by his belief that Ovid's descriptions of landscape are merely stylised backdrops without detail into failing to appreciate fully the part played by landscape in the process of metamorphosis. In many cases, human beings actually become part of this backdrop: Daphne, Dryope, Myrrha, Philemon and Baucis become trees; Niobe becomes a weeping rock; Clyte, Narcissus, Hyacinthus and Leucothoe become flowers; Byblis becomes a fountain. Moreover, to accuse Ovid of a lack of detail seems to fly in the face of the evidence.

6. Hermaphroditus dives into the pool, followed by Salmacis and is eventually merged with her in the water when her attempted rape is unsuccessful. The water is then permanently endowed with the ability to emasculate. Thus duality is the essence of the story; Salmacis' dual identity and Hermaphroditus' dual sex.
7. See, for example, the description of Diana's pool where Actaon meets his doom (M.3. 155-162), Narcissus' pool (M.3. 407-412), the grove of Tempe (M.1. 568-574), the meadow where Proserpine is seized by Pluto (M.5. 385-391).

Although there are undoubtedly elements common to all these descriptions, each is also given at least one individual detail which distinguishes it.
8. See, for example, the description of Myrrha's transformation (M.10. 488-502).
9. For example, the description of Circe supervising the making of potions by her nymphs, just as a Roman matrona would oversee the spinning or cooking (M.14. 261-270) or Peneus' desire for "gener" and "nepotes", which is very Roman (M.1. 481-2).
10. cf. Jupiter's speech, M.9. 428-438.
11. There is also a sense of doom in Ovid's introduction to the whole legend, which explains Acrisius' refusal to accept the birth of his grandson. The implication is that no good will come of the king's action.
12. Morris also considered art to be the result of hard work and ability. He is reported by Mackail, Life of William Morris Vol.1. 186 as having said: " 'That talk of inspiration is sheer nonsense, I may tell you that flat, ... there is no such thing: it is a mere matter of craftsmanship'. "

Writers on Ovid do not seem to give proper weight to the vast amount of preparatory work and organisation that must have gone into the Metamorphoses; they tend instead to re-echo Ovid's remark about youthful improvisation (Tristia 4. 10. 24-6).

Appendix - Additional Perseus Material

1. James Carnegie, Earl of Southesk "Andromeda. A Ballad"
(in The Burial of Isis and other Poems, Edinburgh 1884)

All on the shores at Iopa a mournful maiden wept;
The wandering billows on the sea ran laughingly and leapt;
The ripples of her sunny hair were smiling to the skies,
Wan was her face with wild despair, and fountains were her eyes;
Like silver in a golden day her beauteous body shone,
Dark fetters hung around her limbs; and there she stood alone.
Then suddenly the waters swelled, and from the ocean caves
There issued forth a mighty snake, that towered above the waves.
He opened wide the ghastly gap his crested head below,
Where fangs like bare bones in a grave were champing to and fro,
And set his grim and greedy eyes upon the maiden near;
Against the purple cliff she lay, entranced with utter fear.
Close came the serpent, from his jaws he scattered clots of foam,
He bended back his crest to strike, - when, from the azure dome
A ray of magic, flashing bright, threw lustre on his face,
And one who rode on golden wings descended on the place.
A buckler in his hand he shook, and lo' there was revealed
A visage wreathed about with snakes, full on that warrior's shield.
Then, quickly as the furious flame that rages far and near
Will shrink aghast unto the earth, and hiss with sudden fear,
When over it a torrent flows, invincible of might, -
So hissing dropped the snake, his blood congealing at the sight
Of sad Medusa's visage drear, with tireless eyes that mock;
And straight this serpent did become a rigid form of rock -
Then to the maiden Perseus went (the warrior thus was hight),
And scarcely set on her his eyes, for pity of her plight,
But drew in manner of a veil her hair across her breast,
And drew it round her body bare, which swoonêd lay at rest.
Thereafter from the maiden's limbs the brazen chains he tore;
And gave her to her watching kin, who led her from the shore
And brought her to her royal home. Then Perseus straightway came,
And from King Cepheus, as was meet, his guerdon he did claim -
So Cepheus and Cassiopê, her sire and mother, there
To Perseus gave, to be his wife, Andromeda the fair.

In this version a late deviation from the original story occurs;
Perseus uses the Gorgon's head to defeat the sea-creature.

2. Edward Dowden "Andromeda" (in Poems, London, 1876)

This poem occurs in a collection entitled "The Heroines". It tells the story from Andromeda's point of view (cf. Morris) as she recalls the day she was rescued by Perseus. It could be read as an allegory of Christian salvation.

3. Sir James Frazer "The Gorgon's Head" (in The Gorgon's Head and other Literary Pieces)

Although the publication of this work is chronologically outside the Victorian period (1927), it is worthy of note because Frazer has taken the legend and turned it into a fairy story. He even calls Danaë "a fairy's bride". The story is subtitled "A Fantasia" and certainly differs in many ways from the original legend. Frazer introduces a prophecy of doom hanging over King Polydectes (a seer has foretold his death within a year), a prophecy which is fulfilled on the very last night possible. Andromeda's story is completely ignored and a voyage on a ship named "The Olive Branch" is included, instead of the flight on the magic sandals. In his introduction, Frazer discusses the characters of the tale;

"Nobody is likely to suppose that they ever trod the earth in flesh and blood. I will only say that, while I have borrowed the broad outline of the tale from the immortal storehouse of Greek mythology, I have filled in the colours and details from my own imagination. The story was written many years ago as a recreation after the somewhat tedious task of translating Pausanias into English^{*}, when my head was still full of ancient Greece and my fancy still touched by 'all Olympus' faded hierarchy'"

4. Gerard Manley Hopkins "Andromeda" (written 1879, Poems ed. W.H. Gardner, Oxford 1948, repr. 1960)

Now Time's Andromeda on this rock rude,
With not her either beauty's equal or
Her injury's looks off by both horns of shore,
Her flower, her piece of being, doomed dragon's food
Time past she has been attempted and pursued
By many blows and bones; but now hears roar
A wilder beast from West than all were, more
Rife in her wrongs, more lawless and more lewd.

Her Perseus linger and leave her to her extremes?—
Pillowy air he treads a time and hangs
His thoughts on her, forsaken that she seems,
All while her patience, morselled into pangs,
Mounts; then to alight disarming, no one dreams,
With Gorgon's gear and barebill, thongs and fangs."

This poem has been interpreted by Gardner 236 as an allegory in which

*This means he must have written the story about 1898

Andromeda represents the Church of Christ, the monster "the new powers of Antichrist" and Perseus Christ. She claims that this symbolism is "clearly suggested in the first line"; presumably, her point is that "Time's Andromeda" must be something other than "Andromeda" simpliciter. However, John Wain (see Chap. 3 n.10) emphasises the undoubted pictorial quality of the poem. Hopkins is giving us a picture and capturing a moment in time (cf. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's comment that a sonnet is "a moment's monument"). The poem is complete in itself and does not require the kind of elaborate gloss provided by Professor Gardner.

5. Charles Kingsley "Andromeda" ^{1st. publ. 1858} (Poems, London 1880)
 Kingsley narrates the story of Perseus in his children's book The Heroes and this poem tells one episode from that tale in greater detail. According to Kingsley, the deity offended by Cassiope's boast is Atergatis, queen of fishes. He also adds a long section at the end of the story which includes a dialogue between Aphrodite and Athene and a description of Olympus. Note that Kingsley chooses to use the accusative "Andromeden" and "Persea" as appropriate.

6. Frederick, Lord Leighton "Perseus and Andromeda"

This painting, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, shows another development of the legend: Perseus was considered to have ridden Pegasus to fight the monster. Burne-Jones also considered using this detail but rejected it in favour of the original version. (see Burne-Jones Sketchbook No. 1085, 19v: Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).

7. Sir Lewis Morris "Andromeda" (The Epic of Hades in The Works of Lewis Morris, London 1890)

Like Dowden's poem, this is a narration of her own rescue by Andromeda. There is much emphasis on her virginity and her pride in sacrificing herself for the sake of her people. The final part of her speech is obviously Christian in thought, referring to "one who was Divine", who was "crowned with a new crown/Of suffering" and came to save all young

souls as she was saved. The last scene depicts Andromeda sitting in a kind of divine rapture, smiling like "a saint".

8. Sir Edward J. Poynter "Perseus and Andromeda"

(For an illustration, see Cosmo Monkhouse Sir E.J.Poynter, P.R.A. His Life and Works London 1897)

This painting was last heard of in the collection of Lord Wharncliffe at the beginning of this century. The figure of Andromeda is very similar to Burne-Jones' (the two painters were brothers-in-law) and there is a village or town painted into the background. However, the sea-monster looks far more like a terrible kind of bear (like those in Landseer's painting "Man proposes, God disposes") and Perseus is dressed in a more obviously classical costume than in the Burne-Jones picture.

9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti "Aspecta Medusa"

Although this work exists only as a rough pencil drawing (owned by Birmingham Art Gallery), it is significant because it obviously influenced Burne-Jones' portrayal of the same event in "Perseus and His Bride" (The Baleful Head). Rossetti, as was his custom, also wrote a poem to accompany the picture.

"Andromeda, by Perseus saved and wed,
Hankered each day to see the Gorgon's head;
Till o'er a fount he held it, bade her lean,
And mirrored in the wave was safely seen
That death she lived by.

Let not thine eyes know
Any forbidden thing itself, although
It once should save as well as kill; but be
Its shadow upon life enough for thee.

PYGMALION - OVID'S INTERPRETATION

Apart from Ovid's own account of the Pygmalion story, one version is still accessible, in the work of two Christian apologists; Clement of Alexandria and Arnobius. Both are reporting the work of another writer, Philostephanus.

Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus 4, 51

οὕτως ὁ κύπριος ὁ Πυγμαλίων ἐκεῖνος
ἐλεφαντίνου ἠράσθη ἀγάλματος· τὸ ἄγαλμα
Ἀφροδίτης ἦν καὶ γυμνὴ ἦν· νικάται 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. Ποσειδίππος ἱστορεῖ·
ὁ μὲν πρότερος ἐν τῷ περὶ Κύπρου, ὁ δὲ
ἕτερος ἐν τῷ περὶ Κνίδου.

Arnobius, Adversus Gentes 6, 22

Philostephanus in Cypriacis auctor est, Pygmalionem regem Cypri simulacrum Veneris, quod sanctitatis apud Cyprios et religionis habebatur antiquae, adamasse ut feminam, mente, anima, lumine rationis iudic^{ei}que caecatis; soliturque dementem, tamquam si uxoria res esset, sublevato in lectulum numine copularier amplexibus atque ore, resque alias agere libidinis vacuae imaginatione frustrabilis. consimili ratione Posidippus in eo libro, quem scriptum super Cnido indicat, superque rebus eius, adolescentem haud ignobilem memorat, sed vocabulum eius obscurat, correptum amoribus Veneris, propter quam Cnidus in nomine est, amatorias et ipsum miscuisse lascivias, cum eiusdem numinis signo genialibus usum toris, et voluptatum consequentium finibus.

Philostephanus was a compatriot and pupil of Callimachus. Little of his work remains¹ but it is known that he wrote accounts of the cities and regions of the Greek world. In particular, he described their foundation legends and the aetiologies of their cults.

In one of these works, *Κυπριακά*, he is reported to have narrated the legend of Pygmalion (Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus 4, 51; Arnobius, Adversus Gentes 6, 22). Philostephanus was "a true Callimachean" (Pfeiffer History of Classical Scholarship. From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age 151). Both the interest of the Callimachean circle (attested by Callimachus himself, Ister, Apollonius Rhodius) in religious rites and their ἄγια and the evidence of the few extant fragments² alike strongly suggest that Philostephanus' account was an ἄγριον of the hierogamy between the king of the island and its goddess, not merely an obscene tale as reported by the Christian Fathers³.

Ovid sets the Pygmalion story between two other Cyprian tales (the Propoetides and Myrrha), which may also have been in Philostephanus.⁴ In the legend reported by Clement and Arnobius, Pygmalion falls in love with a statue of Venus but he is not himself the sculptor. Ovid, however, describes the creation of the woman-statue by Pygmalion.⁵ He retains the original setting, Cyprus, an island famous for its cult of Aphrodite-worship.

All three Cyprian⁶ tales are set within the song of Orpheus in Book 10 of the Metamorphoses. Before he begins, Orpheus declares his intention to sing of boys whom the gods have loved and of girls who fall victim to unlawful passions and are punished. It is difficult to see where Pygmalion's story fits into this scheme. There can be no comparison between Venus' patronage of him and her sexual passion for Adonis for example, a story also included in this cycle. As Pygmalion's story is only the second main tale in Orpheus' narration, the singer's declared intentions are still present to the audience's mind. Ovid thus establishes a link, albeit tenuous, between the two themes and the tales. If Pygmalion's story does not fit one, then by implication it would seem to be associated with the other.

Before Pygmalion's story, Ovid narrates briefly the tale of the Propoetides, apparently the first prostitutes. They are turned to stone for "denying the goddess". According to Herodotus 1, 199

and Athenaeus 12, 516a, temple-prostitution was frequently practised in Cyprus as a form of worship and was considered an act of piety. Behaving as a prostitute would not, then, constitute a denial of Venus. Originally (though not in Ovid) the Propoetides, whose story bears a strong resemblance to that of Cinyras' daughters (Apollodorus 3:14, 3-4), must have committed some other crime. As Heinrich Dörrie (Pygmalion Ein Impuls Ovids und seine Wirkungen bis in die Gegenwart {Oplanden 1974} 13) explains:

"Diese taten, was in Tempel-bezirk und im Auftrag der Göttin geboten war, ausserhalb und ohne Auftrag, jedoch ganz gewiss zum eigenen Gewinn. Mit anderen Worten, sie durchbrachen das Monopol, das das Heiligtum ausübte."

The transition from the Propoetides to the Pygmalion narrative is abrupt. Ovid gives no information about Pygmalion's background or personal situation. He is not even introduced as an artist-craftsman and this skill is not evident until he creates the statue. This technique is typically Ovidian in the way it tantalises the audience but has a serious purpose⁷. Ovid suppresses information about Pygmalion, gradually revealing details which lead his readers to make their own assumptions; these are then overturned. As this happens, the story itself metamorphoses, taking on new meaning and significance as it unfolds. This technique has been noted by Due 134f: each tale shifts its focus as the one following is read and sheds new light on its predecessor. In the case of the Pygmalion episode, the story itself alters as it continues.

The story of Pygmalion has been described as "a fable of a miracle, of art, of love, and of a better human being", (H. Fränkel Ovid: A Poet between Two Worlds { Berkeley 1945} 93). It offers, we are told, a metaphor for the creative process; the artist creates a perfect work of art which then comes to life. Pygmalion is alternatively seen as a good man whose piety is rewarded by the goddess. However, neither of these interpretations takes into consideration the clear undercurrent of eroticism which runs through the poetry.

Pygmalion, we are told, is so disgusted by the women around him (the Propoetides) that he ~~shuns~~ shuns all women and lives alone for a long time.

"quas quia Pygmalion aevum per crimen agentis
viderat, offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti
femineae natura dedit, sine coniuge caelebs
vivebat thalamique diu consorte carebat." (M 10, 243-6)

We are reminded that Orpheus is the narrator of this episode. The story of how, after Eurydice's death, he shunned all females and took to the amorous pursuit of young boys has already been narrated by Ovid; hence it is not surprising that women should be credited with so many vices here. One may also suspect perhaps an etymological pun on natura "birth": cf. "qua femina nasci" (248).

Pygmalion rejects nature's women (later, in favour of an artificially created one), a stance which itself seems strange and unnatural. The language chosen by Ovid to describe his bachelor life emphasises its sterility. He uses words which accentuate the negative aspects of such an existence, and the lack of a necessary ingredient for a full life; "sine coniuge", "consorte carebat". When one remembers that the story is set on Aphrodite's own island and that as a goddess she represents generation and fertility, Pygmalion's behaviour appears all the more unsatisfactory.

Having rejected the women provided by nature, Pygmalion sets about creating his own ideal out of ivory. He is obviously a great craftsman⁸ for the statue possesses a beauty "qua femina nasci/nulla potest ... " (M 10, 248-9). Ovid does not claim that the statue's beauty is greater than any living woman's; he specifically declares that she possesses a beauty unattainable by any woman born. Aphrodite was the goddess who personified ideal female beauty and was like no woman born in two senses; she was a goddess and therefore supernatural but she was also born, according to legend, from the sea-spume, not from male and female. In fact she is the product of only male seed (Uranus' testicles) like Pygmalion's statue: the ancients thought that both sexes had seed which was mingled in procreation. The



suggestion seems to be, therefore, that the statue represents the goddess, as in Philostephanus' aetiology. Bömer 98 dismisses these lines as:

"einer Frage poetisch-technischer Variation, die hier zu einer 'paradoxalen' Formulierung greift."

This does not seem adequate. The emphasis Ovid puts on the ideal perfection of the statue's form (especially within the setting of Cyprus, with all its associations) suggests an identification with Aphrodite⁹.

Once the statue is finished, Pygmalion falls in love with it;

"... operisque sui concepit amorem" (M. 10, 249)

The word "concepit" is a metaphor from pregnancy and child-birth¹⁰, already brought to mind by the use of "nasci" in the previous line. Such associations are important. It was not uncommon for a work of art to be considered the "child" of its creator. Ovid himself uses this notion at Tristia 3; 1, 658.

"quarebam fratres, exceptis scilicet illis,
quos suus optaret non genuisse pater."

(referring to his own books). Although it is clear that what Pygmalion conceives is a passion, the use of "concepit" and "nasci", combined with the emphatic "sui" ("his own"), hints at the notion that the statue is, in a sense, Pygmalion's "child".

Having already drawn attention to the great beauty of the statue, Ovid now emphasises its life-like qualities:

"virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,

et, si non obstat reverentia, velle moveri." (M. 10, 250-1)

The interpretation of these lines is problematic. It is unclear whose modesty or shame ("reverentia") is inhibiting any desire for movement. If the statue were of Aphrodite, the meaning would be clear; the statue's modesty would prevent her from moving. She is naked and in the presence of a man. If she were to move, she would reveal more of herself than she would wish. The pose for a statue of Aphrodite probably best known to Ovid and his contemporaries is

the "Venus Pudica"¹¹ or possibly the "Crouching Aphrodite"¹². Both involve the covering of the erogenous zones: this is particularly notable in "Venus Pudica" (the stance, in fact, of Botticelli's Venus). There were numerous copies in Augustan Rome of the two statues from which these poses were taken; the Aphrodite Bathing by Doidalsas and the Aphrodite of Cnidos by Praxiteles.

The Aphrodite Bathing is mentioned (post-Ovid) by Pliny (36. 35) and described as "Aphrodite washing herself". He also mentions the Aphrodite of Cnidos, praising its great beauty (36. 20f)¹³. Apparently it was the inspiration for many later Aphrodites, the most interesting in this context being the Venus de Medici (now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence). This statue shows Aphrodite with one hand across her breasts and the other over her pubic area. As there were many Roman copies of this work Ovid could have visualised Pygmalion's statue¹⁴ in this same pose. It would, therefore, seem reasonable to assume that the disputed clause alludes to the statue's own modesty which inhibits her from moving¹⁵.

The statue is so life-like that Ovid comments

"Ars adeo latet arte sua ... " (M. 10, 252)

The phrase recalls Ovid's description of the cave of Diana, where Actaeon is about to meet his fate;

" ... simulaverat artem

ingenio natura suo ... " (M. 3, 158-9)

Ovid appears to be inverting the ancient judgement that the greatest art was that which most closely imitated nature. He was clearly aware of the paradoxes inherent in such a notion and pokes gentle fun to emphasise them.

It has generally been assumed that "ars adeo latet arte sua" represents Ovid's unqualified praise for Pygmalion's work. The phrase is often taken out of context and applied to the poet's own work. However, a leitmotif of the Metamorphoses is the deceptiveness of appearances. Ovid presents his audience with numerous examples of how downfall comes when a person is deceived into accepting as real

something which is merely an illusion. A good example of this occurs in the story of Callisto (M. 3, 409 ff.). She is seduced by Jupiter who is in the guise of Diana, her protectress. The one in whom she places all her trust apparently betrays her. Moreover, the poem's overall theme is change from one state to another (normally from human to non-human). This is not to say that Ovid is not praising the statue when he uses this beautifully-balanced phrase. However, he was acutely aware of the deceptiveness of appearances and his readers will be conscious of this.

The phrase should remind us that the statue is not real; it is only ivory, despite Pygmalion's behaviour towards it. Ovid reiterates the view that this "girl" is not what she might seem in the following lines:

"... miratur et haurit

pectore Pygmalion simulati corporis ignes."

It is a "simulatum corpus", not the real body itself. It is also interesting that Ovid expresses Pygmalion's enkindled passion in this way. One ancient view was that the flame of love issued from the loved one and lodged in the heart of the lover¹⁶, a notion which gives an active role to the object of a passion.

The use of words like "haurit" and "ignes" conveys vividly the strength of Pygmalion's passion and, when juxtaposed with a phrase such as "simulati corporis", perhaps also indicates the fleshly quality of his love. Logically, of course, Pygmalion can be in love only with the statue's beautiful body because, as a piece of ivory, she can have no mind or personality to attract him.

Ovid now describes Pygmalion's behaviour towards his "ivory maiden", making it quite clear that the creator has, against reason, convinced himself of the reality of his creation:

"saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit

corpus an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur." (M.10, 254-5)

The artist begins by testing the statue frequently, obviously wishing it were a living woman but knowing it is not. He tries to reject this

unpalatable fact by refusing to call it ivory, consciously refusing to accept the truth. He then begins to treat it as a human being, kissing and fondling it. Ovid describes how he thinks his kisses are returned and believes his fingers sink into real flesh when he touches the statue. He deludes himself completely. His great concern for the statue is demonstrated by his fear that he may bruise its "flesh" with his fingers¹⁷. The whole process is observed in only a few lines, an example of Ovid's acute psychological insight¹⁸.

Pygmalion, despite his long absence from the company of women, proves to be an accomplished lover, following the precepts laid down by Ovid in the Ars Amatoria and the Amores. The passage also recalls the love-elegies of Tibullus and Propertius. Pygmalion flatters his statue and brings it little presents, just as any lover would his mistress. It is amusing to note that he takes one piece of advice in particular given by Ovid in the Ars Amatoria. On the subject of presents Ovid says:

"nec dominam iubeo pretiosa munere dones:

parva, sed e parvis callidus apta dato." (Ars.Am. 2, 261-2)

The list of small gifts, the painted stones, birds and shells, is strongly reminiscent of a passage from Propertius (3. 13, 27 ff.)

"illis munus erant decussa Cydonia ramo

et dare puniceis plena canistra rubis,

nunc violas tondere manu, nunc mixta referre

lilia virgineos lucida per calathos

et portare suis vestitas frondibus uvas

aut varium plumae versicoloris avem.

His tum blanditiis furtiva per antra puellae

oscula silvicolis empta dedere viris."

There are also echoes of Theocritus' Idylls: he mentions flowers, apples, birds and locks of hair as presents given by lovers¹⁹.

Ovid clearly establishes Pygmalion as an accomplished lover, going about his wooing in the prescribed fashion. He dresses the statue up in beautiful garments and bedecks it with jewels, a practice which recalls the adorning of statues of the gods for festal days.

However, it is also highly erotic; Pygmalion obviously dresses and undresses his beautiful statue with great care and enjoyment. Bömer 102f. concludes that the passage

"ist nicht so sehr eine 'kunstgeschichtliche' Reminiszenz an die Tatsache, dass, 'die archaische Kunst nackte Götterbilder nicht kennt' (Haupt-Ehwald), als eine raffinierte Variante erotischer Dichtung. - Schmuck von Götterbildern ist vielfach überliefert."

When Ovid writes:

"cuncta decent; nec nuda minus formosa videtur" (M. 10,266)
these must be Pygmalion's thoughts.

The undercurrent of sexuality continues to build up. Pygmalion lays his statue on a bed and covers it with expensive coverlets.

"adpellatque tori sociam adclinataque colla
mollihus in plumis, tamquam sensura, reponit." (M. 10, 268-9)

These details reinforce the fact that Pygmalion has convinced himself fully of the statue's humanity and they also explain the relationship he is conducting with the ivory girl. Ovid describes how he calls her "tori sociam", the partner of his bed. It would seem that the poet is relating tactfully how Pygmalion attempts to have a sexual relationship with his statue. The phrase "sociam tori" appears quite often throughout the Metamorphoses, in the sense of "bed-partner" or "wife"²⁰. Note also that there are several other examples of stories about men having physical relationships with statues²¹.

Pygmalion treats his sculpture just as though it were alive, even to the extent of putting soft pillows under its head. However, although Pygmalion has convinced himself of its humanity, Ovid reminds us of the illusion by adding the qualification "tamquam sensura".

The day of Venus' festival arrives, the first time the goddess is mentioned in the episode. This places the story so far in a new context. Until this point it has, on the surface, simply

concerned a sculptor and his statue for which he develops a passion. By reminding the audience of the setting and its religious significance (Cyprus, the centre of Aphrodite-worship), Ovid expands the significance of the story. He also alters the context of the tale from the very constricted world of Pygmalion's inner life to the wider sphere of the whole island. We are now given the first hint that Pygmalion has a standing higher than that of a simple sculptor as he approaches Venus' altar with his own gift of incense, an act implying kingship²². He prays not to Venus specifically but to all the gods ("di").

Much has been made of Pygmalion's piety and modesty in not daring to ask for the ivory maiden itself²³ (herself?) but "one like the ivory maiden" (e.g. Otis 91). If the statue is accepted as being one of Venus herself, then his reluctance to ask for the actual thing is understandable and could perhaps be called pious, though not in the sense that Otis means. Pygmalion's prayer makes good sense. He is not asking for the goddess herself, an outrageous and blasphemous request, but for a woman who looks just like her. If this is the case, then the notion of asking for the statue's vivification may not have occurred to him and his later astonishment at the miracle is more understandable than if he had simply been afraid to put the idea into words. Pygmalion's prayers are received with a favourable sign and he returns home.

On reaching his house, Ovid describes how the sculptor immediately rushes to the bed where the statue is lying. This act makes no particular sense in the light of his prayer. He cannot be rushing to see if the statue is coming to life because he requested no such thing and he does not know that Venus read his mind when she sent a favourable sign. A more likely explanation is that he is simply acting as he always does; as soon as he reaches home, he always seeks out his statue. This is, of course, quite in keeping with his obsessive behaviour so far.

In describing his action Ovid does not now call the statue an ivory maiden. Instead he refers to "simulacra suae ... puellae".

This is the second of two instances when the sculpture is called "puella", the first being when Pygmalion is "wooing it". Although the word is commonly translated as "girl", it can mean "mistress", of more significance in this case. Horace makes frequent use of "puella" in this way, particularly in the Odes, and there are also examples in Ovid and Propertius²⁴. The connection with love-elegy is appropriate, especially in the wooing scene. In this context,

" ... modo grata puellis
munera fert ... " (M. 10, 259-60)

should be read as "gifts pleasing to mistresses" rather than "to girls". This obviously makes sense when one recalls that the giving of small gifts was essential for an Ovidian (or Propertian or Tibullan) lover.

Having used the word in this elegiac context, Ovid is playing on its dual meaning when it occurs the second time. When the statue is described as "simulacra suae ... puellae", Ovid is suggesting subtly that Pygmalion is using it as a substitute for a mistress²⁵. As the statue is also lying on a bed, there are clear sexual overtones to the description.

Pygmalion now begins to kiss his statue:

"incumbensque toro dedit oscula ... " (M. 10, 280)

"incumbensque" has been translated as "leaning over" but usually means "lying on". Again, Ovid presents an erotic image, Pygmalion actually lying on the bed on the statue to kiss and fondle it. As he does so, the sculptor senses a change in his ivory maiden; his gradual awareness of the statue's vivification is vividly described. Ovid begins by expressing his sense of doubt:

" ... visa tepere est."

The use of the ambiguous "videor" creates a sense of uncertainty, Pygmalion's and the audience's. Pygmalion kisses again and tests her breasts with his hands, another indication of an erotic relationship between man and statue; there are many other ways to test her warmth but this is his immediate choice, hardly a "reverent" act. Now the transformation actually begins. The ivory softens and Pygmalion's

fingers sink into it.

In describing the transformation, Ovid employs exactly the same detail as he used earlier to show how Pygmalion had persuaded himself the statue was real.

" ... positoque rigore
subsidit digitis ... " (M. 10, 285-6)

corresponds to

"et credit tactis digitos insidere membris" (M. 10, 257)

The simile Ovid uses to describe the softening process has also occurred earlier in the poem, in the Daedalus episode.

" ... ut Hymettia sole
cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas
flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu." (M. 10, 284-6)

recalls the same image in Book 8:

" ... flavam modo pollice ceram
mollibat ... " (M. 8, 198-9)

and

" ... rapidi vicinia solis
mollit odoratas, pennarum vincula, ceras
tabuerant cerae ... " (M. 8, 225-7)

There is, perhaps, an interesting link between the two stories in that Daedalus also tried to imitate nature through his art but with less happy results than Pygmalion. Daedalus moulds the wax into the anchorage for his artificial wings and Pygmalion has moulded the ivory into his ideal woman. In both case, the implication is that nature has been manipulated to satisfy the desires of men.

Pygmalion is astounded by this change (proof, perhaps, that he had no such miracle in mind when he returned home). He is caught between joy and doubt:

" ... et dubie gaudet fallique veretur " (M. 10, 286)

(another example of Ovid's psychological realism). Excitedly and urgently he tests the statue time and again.

"rursus amans rursusque manu sua vota retractat" (M. 10, 288)
has been taken to have some religious meaning, "vota" being interpreted

as "prayers". However, "vota" also means "desires" or "objects of desire", a reading which changes the sense of the line subtly and makes more sense of "retractat".

Having enabled us to participate in Pygmalion's astonishment, Ovid now surprises his audience with a final revelation about the sculptor's status. He is referred to as "Paphius ... heros", Lord of Paphos. Only now is his noble birth made clear; Ovid's Pygmalion is the king of Cyprus. It seems anachronistic, of course, that Pygmalion should be referred to as the hero of Paphos, when we are told shortly afterwards that Paphos is named after his child, and this fact seems to have distracted critics from giving the word "heros" its full significance.

The sculptor-king gives thanks to Venus for the miracle and kisses the maiden again! He presses his lips to a mouth which is "non falsa", now alive. The statue-maiden receives Pygmalion's kisses but does not return them. Instead, she blushes. Ovid explains:

"... timidumque ad limina lumen

attollens pariter cum caelo vidit amantem" (M.10, 293-4)

There are obvious parallels between the vivification of the statue and a human birth (which in a sense it is). However, instead of seeing the light of day and its mother, the statue first sees the light of day and then its lover. This image of birth reinforces the view that the statue is, in a sense, the child of Pygmalion, a notion which would have obvious bearing on the Myrrha story (who also has a sexual relationship with her father). The birth motif is continued in the next few lines as Ovid describes the marriage between Pygmalion and the statue-maiden, which is attended by Venus, and then the birth of Paphos nine months later (the word "concupio" recurs in this passage in the phrase "plenissima concipit ... verba"). Paphos' son was Cinyras, whose daughter was Myrrha, whose story is then narrated.

Interpretations such as Fränkel's, Otis' or Griffin's ("Ovid's Metamorphoses" G. and R. 24 {1977} 57-60) are unsatisfactory. There are strong sexual overtones in much of Ovid's narration which

contradict the view of the story as one of piety rewarded. His treatment is erotic rather than obscene but a physical relationship between sculptor and statue is implied²⁶.

Ovid seems to have remythologized the story reported by Clement and Arnobius. The first element of his narration deals with the story of a man on Cyprus who falls in love with a statue and has a sexual relationship with it. In the second, the man becomes Pygmalion, the king of Cyprus, and the statue is Venus, their union being the *ἱερὸς γάμος* probably described by Philostephanus. The two aspects cannot be divided and are therefore told more or less concurrently. In the Perseus episode Ovid showed his audience two sides of one character at once; here he shows two sides of the same story. Thus he represses information about Pygmalion's rank until the latter part of the narration and even calls him "Paphius ... heros", apparently before the birth of Paphos. The Paphian hero Pygmalion is the origin of the Pygmalion mentioned by the Christian Fathers. Ovid has restored its meaning to the story. Although the Pygmalion episode is comparatively short, Ovid makes his audience experience the whole development of the myth; as the story develops, so does the myth and so does the audience's understanding. In a sense this is another type of metamorphosis.

Ovid is frequently commended for his version of the Pygmalion story. He is said to have made the tale his own and is lauded for his artistry in creating a story about "the idealist who realizes his love by his very refusal to accept a sordid reality" (Otis 191). (cf. G. Galinsky Ovid's Metamorphoses. An Introduction to the Basic Aspects {Oxford 1975} 89 "Ovid's change of Pygmalion from the perverse agalmatophilic of the traditional version to a pious lover and suppliant was essential to the novel meaning which he imported to the character of Pygmalion")²⁷. Dörrie, in his interesting analysis of the Pygmalion theme, makes the point that Pygmalion cannot be considered an archetype; each generation has responded to it in a different way. However, in this century the story has acquired various "moralistic, intellectual interpretations" (Wilkinson 212), obscuring rather than

illuminating the original meaning. It is a pity that, as a result, Ovid's true ingenuity and artistic skill are often ignored. However, it is certainly the case that, as Dörrie 30 declares,

"Die ungemeine Bereicherung, die nachmals aus der Geschichte von Pygmalion und seiner Statue gewonnen werden sollte, hat die europäische Literatur allein Ovid zu verdanken."

NOTES

1. See Müller Fr. Hist. Graec. 3, 28-34 (incomplete), Gisinger R.E. 20 (1941) cols. 104-18.
2. See P.M. Fraser Ptolemaic Alexandria Vol 1 (Oxford 1972) 523 f.
3. The Fathers were both writing treatises exposing the "shortcomings of paganism". To this end they emphasised the way that pagan religions disturbed men's spirits.
4. Lycophron 826 tells another Cyprian petrification story of how Aphrodite turned a treacherous old woman to stone on the island. The goddess had fled there after being surprised in her affair with Ares, and her presence was betrayed by the woman.
5. Cf. the creation of Pandora: Hesiod Theogony 571 ff.
6. Ovid apparently tries to move the story of Myrrha further east (316-7 "totoque Oriente iuventa/ad thalami certamen adest") but he names her father as Cinyras, who had strong links with Cyprus and the Aphrodite-cult there (according to Clement 2, 13 and Arnobius 5, 19, he was the legendary founder of the practice of temple-prostitution).
7. There are several examples of how Ovid teases his audience in the Metamorphoses. For example, at the end of Book 2 he narrates the story of Europa's abduction by Zeus. The girl has innocently climbed on to the bull's back and is now being carried out to sea. She is terrified and glances desperately back at the shore. Ovid ends the story suddenly at this point and leaves his audience to draw its own conclusions as to what follows. A particularly evocative descriptive detail closes the episode and the book;
" ... tremula sinuatur flamine vestes."

Ovid also occasionally uses the technique of describing the stories he (or his characters) are not going to tell, thereby arousing his audience's curiosity but not satisfying it. For example, the story of Salmacis (Book 4) is told by Alcithoe, one of the Theban women who refused to attend Bacchus' rites. Before she begins her narration, however, she gives a short list of the tales she will not tell:
" 'vulgatos taceo' dixit 'pastoris amores
Daphnidis Idaei, quem nymphe paelicis ira
contulit in saxum: tantus dolor urit amantes,
nec loquor, ut quondam naturae iure novato
ambiguus fuerit modo vir, modo femina Sithon
te quoque, nunc adamas, quondam fidissime parvo,
Celmi , Iovi largoque satos Curetas ab imbri
et Crocon in parvos versum cum Smilace flores
praetereo dulcique animos novitate tenebo .'" (M.4, 276-284)
8. There are numerous examples of tales concerning the skill of real artists, from the Hellenistic Greeks to the Italian Masters.

Possibly the best known of these traditions in classical times was that of Myron's "Cow". Its life-like appearance is referred to many times and is the subject of much praise. (see Overbeck Die Antiken Schriftquellen nos. 558-610. The "Cow" was made of bronze and, according to Gow-Page (H.E. 2. 63), was presumably a votive offering.

Another example occurs in Pliny (35.65). He tells the story of Zeuxis who painted some grapes so life-like that birds tried to peck them. Parrhasios then produced a painting of a curtain and Zeuxis asked for the curtain to be pulled back from the picture. When this was attempted, it was found that the curtain was painted and therefore Zeuxis acknowledged Parrhasios' superior artistry.

The tradition continues through the Renaissance. Vasari (8. 294) relates how Titian, having painted a portrait of Pope Paul III, stood it in the window to dry. People passing by paid homage to it, mistaking it for the real man. In the nineteenth century the Pre-Raphaelites are also associated with this theme. Effie Millais in her diary (1. 324) describes how "Spring Flowers" (one of her husband's pictures) attracted real bees to settle on its painted blooms as it stood outside on the easel.

Parallel to the abilities to deceive of real artists is the tradition surrounding mythical ones which endows them with the power to create moving, "living" works. Apart from Hephaestus, the craftsman-god who was, for example, the creator of Pandora, the first and most important mythical craftsman is Daedelus. According to legend he could create completely life-like images (Pasiphae's bull, for example) but more than this, his statues were also supposed to have had the power of movement. (Suda Δαιδάλου ποιήματα, Diodorus Siculus 4. 76). Ancient writers tried to put forward rational^{istic} explanations for this extraordinary ability. Philippus, the comic dramatist, for example, explained it by saying that Daedelus filled his statue of Aphrodite with mercury (Aristotle De Anima 1. 3).

There is also some evidence that Daedelus' images were supposed to have the power of speech as well as movement (R.E. 4. 2002). It seems obvious that even in antiquity there was an identification between the divine creator (of man and the world) and the artist. However, the complementary notions of "deus artifex" and "divino artista" were not fully developed until the Renaissance, when the human artist was held to be divinely inspired in his work.

These two traditions, the realism expected of the work of art and the ability of the mythical artist to vivify his work, lead to another important aspect of the concept of the artist; the way in which men regarded these works of art as "alive". This tendency to regard works as having a life of their own is well illustrated in the original (i.e. Philostephanan) legend of Pygmalion and the similar story about the Aphrodite of Cnidos (see Lucian Amores 15.9). In each case a man falls in love with a statue and treats it as a woman, having sexual intercourse with it.

Similarly, an image is sometimes considered to have magical powers, the origin of effigy magic. The image is seen to possess the living essence of what it represents and so the real entity can, for example, be damaged if the image is damaged. An interesting reversal of this notion occurs in Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Grey when the ravages undergone by the real Grey are transmitted instead to his portrait.

Kris and Kurz (Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist {Yale 1979} 79) make an interesting point about the older beliefs in effigy magic, that the stronger the belief in the identity of picture and depicted, the less the concern to make the work of art as "life-like" as possible. (Aphrodite, for example, was originally worshipped in the East in the form of a simple white cone {Tacitus Hist. 2.3 }) They continue:

"in subsequent eras when this belief was on the wane, naturalism was regarded as a distinct accomplishment of the artist. This then provides us with a clue why the anecdote about the deceptive power of a work of art is found among the very earliest reports about painters and sculptors - the information in fact comes from the Hellenistic period. The artist's handiwork closes the gap separating picture and depicted. At the same time, however, the anecdote contains elements of the accounts in which the mythical artist is described as the creator of enlivened things."

9. Dörrie sees the Pygmalion episode as a contrast to the story of Myrrha. He therefore argues strongly(27) that the statue is not one of Aphrodite, as indeed it cannot be if his interpretation is followed. He also maintains that Ovid has changed his material in order to remove the vestiges of its aetiological origins;
 "Dank Ovid hat diese Geschichte den Charakter einer rechtfertigenden Kultlegende fast ganz verloren; was hierher gehört, ist ganz an den Rand gerückt;"
10. There are numerous examples of the word being used in this sense:
 M.4, 611 ("quem pluvio Danæ conceperat auro")
 M.3, 214 ("deque lupo concepta Nape")
 M.10, 328 ("ex illo concepit ales")
 M.3, 268 ("concipit: id deerat ")
 M.11, 222 ("concipe: mater eris iuvenis")
 Perhaps the most interesting in this context occurs at M.10. 470. Myrrha is described returning from her father's bedroom to her own:
 "... et in pia diro
 semina fert utero conceptaque crimina portat".
 The literal and metaphorical meanings are combined.
11. See B.M. Fellatti-Maj "Aphrodite Pudica". Saggio d'arte ellenistica Archeologia Classica 3 (1951), 33ff.
12. See G. Lippold "Die Griechische Plastik" in Handbuch der Archäologie 3, 1 (1950) plates 112.1 (Doidalsas' Aphrodite), 83.3 (Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidos), 104.1 (Capitoline Aphrodite).
 M. Robertson A History of Greek Art (2nd Volume) plates 127c (Medici Aphrodite), 127d (Capitoline Aphrodite).

13. 36; 21 tells how the Aphrodite of Cnidos could be viewed from all sides in its shrine and also relates briefly the story of a man who fell in love with it and "embraced" it. His action was betrayed by the stain left on the statue.

The statue is also discussed and described by Lucian (*Ἐκόνες* 4,6).

14. The Aphrodite of Cnidos (about which Poseidippos is reported to tell a story very similar to that of Pygmalion's statue {Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* 4, 51; Arnobius *Adversus Gentes* 6,22}) stands by a hydria, over which she is draping her robe. Her right hand is positioned in front of her pubic area and, although she is not deliberately covering herself, it is easy to see how this pose was gradually developed into "Venus Pudica".

Apart from the Venus de Medici, the other statues apparently inspired by Praxiteles' Aphrodite are the Leconfield Aphrodite, the Aphrodites of Capua, of Towley and of Ostia, the Capitoline and the Anadyomene Aphrodites. The Capitoline Aphrodite shows another stage in the development of this type of statue. She is standing by a hydria, over which her robe is already draped, and both her hands are in position covering her. By the time the Venus de Medici appears, the hydria has disappeared but the pose remains.

15. W.S. Anderson in his *Commentary on Books 6 to 10* points out that the lines are "puzzling at first, for we might think our 'reverence' is invoked. The abstract has wide relevance, which is usually restricted by an objective genitive (cf. 9. 123, 428, 566). And ... 'reverentia famae' (7. 145 and 9. 556) indicates the context for this clause. Alive the maiden would be only too aware of her naked beauty { X. 263-266 }, modesty would then prevent her from moving while a man observed."

16. cf. Ovid's description of how Medea's love is rekindled by the sight of Jason (*Met.* 7.76ff.). K.F. Smith *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913) 27 refers to the "bacillus amatorius" which penetrates the lover by way of his eyes.

The Elizabethans maintained this notion, though slightly changed. They considered that the eyes of the loved one shot forth darts of love which were received by the lover: this image occurs, for example, in the love-sonnets of Wyatt and Surrey (strictly speaking, Menrican poets).

17. The use of the word "livor" in the context of a mark of passion has several parallels. Tibullus explains how he gave his mistress potions to get rid of tell-tale love-bites;

"tunc sucos herbasque dedi, quis livor abiret

quem facit impresso mutua dente Venus" (1:6, 13-14)

Ovid also makes frequent use of the word, for example at *Amores* 1:7, 41-2;

"aptius impressis fuerat livere labellis

et collo blandi dentis habere notam."

and again at *Amores* 1:8, 98;

"factaque lascivis livida colla notis"

and even with reference to the marks made by a woman on a man, at Heroides 20. 81-82;

"ipsa meos scindas licet imperiosa capillos,
oraeque sint digitis livida nostra tuis."

It is possible, therefore, that the marks which the deluded Pygmalion fears he might make on the statue's "flesh" could also be seen as marks of passion.

18. Other examples of the psychological realism of Ovid's poetry are numerous, perhaps the best-known being Byblis' fight to overcome her incestuous passion for her brother (M. 9, 474ff.)

19. Theocritus 5, 86f

"φεῦ φεῦ, Λάκων τοι θαλάρως σχεδὸν εἵκατι πληροῖ
πυρῶ καὶ τὸν ἄναβον ἐν ἄνθεσι παῖδα μολύνει"

Theocritus 11, 10f.

"ἦρατο, δ' οὐ μάλοις οὐδέ ῥόδῳ οὐδὲ κικίννοις,
ἀλλ' ὀρθαῖς μαινίαις, ἀγείτο δὲ πάντα πάρεργα"

Theocritus 11, 56f.

"αἶ μὴ τὸ στοῦμα λῆς, ἔφερον δὲ τοι ἥ κρίνα λευκά
ἥ μάκων' ὀκλαὰν ἐρυθρὰ πλαταγῶνι' ἔχοισαν."

20. Pyrrha's presence with Deucalion is described as "cum consorte tori" (M.1, 319). Medea helps Jason when promised marriage ("promisitque torum" M.7, 91). Juno demands the heifer Io as a gift because she is both sister and wife to Jupiter;

"sed leve si munus sociae generisque torique

vacca negaretur, poterat non vacca videri!" (M.1, 620-1)

The word "torus" is also used to mean "bridal bed"

(M.7, 431 "Eumenides stare torum ... ")

21. Both Clement and Arnobius mention Poseidippos' story about the Aphrodite of Cnidos, and the Agathe Tyche in Athens was also alleged to have been used in this way. Aelian Var. Hist. 9,39 relates how an unknown young man, frustrated in his attempt to own the statue, eventually killed himself before it. Bömer also lists other examples; Kleisophos of Selymbria lying with a λιθίνῃ κόρῃ at Samos (Alexis fr. 40 and Philemon fr. 139), Alcetas of Rhodes loving the Eros of Praxiteles (Pliny 36; 22).

22. R.M. Ogilvie The Romans and Their Gods In the Age of Augustus (London 1969) 107 records the fact that Julius Caesar was both "pontifex maximus" and augur and that only the Emperor would be a member of all the four colleges of priests at the same time. — He also explains 109;

"During the monarchy the Roman kings had enjoyed temporal and spiritual power. When they were expelled, the Republican magistracy took over most of their temporal powers and some of their religious rights and duties. What was left was assigned to a substitute king, the "rex sacrorum", who nominally at least, took precedence in all religious ceremonies."

See also J. Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Edinburgh 1908-1921) Volume 10, 325ff.

23. It is significant that Pygmalion refers to the statue as an ivory maiden, thus personifying it. When he asks for a girl like the ivory maiden ("similis mea ... eburnae") he is, of course, asking for nature to copy art, the exact reversal of the normal procedure. Again, the description of the cave in the Actaon episode where "nature simulated art" is brought to mind.

24. See Horace Odes 3. 26,1; Odes 1. 9, 22; Sermones 1. 5, 82; Epistles 1. 18, 74. Ovid at Amores 2. 2,34 observes, "quod voluit fieri blanda puella, facit". Propertius also uses "puella" thus at 3.3,23; 1.5,19; 1.8,24; 3.23,15.

25. "simulacrum" is generally used to mean "resemblance", "likeness" or "representation". It can, therefore be used to refer to an image in a mirror or water. It can also mean "phantom". Other words such as "signum", "statua" and "effigies" have more specific meanings ("statua", for example, refers to a molten statue representing the whole form at full length). Note that "simulacrum" would also be used to refer to images of the gods.

26. Dörrie in his discussion 11ff. emphasises the eroticism of Ovid's treatment, although he denies an identification between the statue and Venus.

27. Contrast the interpretations put forward in Ovid Moralisé (4.3560ff). The first is a kind of aetiology expressed in demythologized terms which has clear parallels with the Cinderella story. Pygmalion is likened to a great lord who has in his household a serving girl, dirty and uneducated perhaps but nonetheless beautiful. Such a lord might take this girl and groom her until finally she is fit to be taken as his wife (cf. Shaw's Pygmalion). The second interpretation sees the story as a Christian allegory about the relationship between God and his creation, humanity.

The Pygmalion Series of Edward Burne-Jones

Burne-Jones executed two series of paintings on the Pygmalion theme. The second and better known series is now owned by Birmingham City Art Gallery. The first is in the Joseph Sutton collection in Paris and, although these paintings are less impressive than the Birmingham set, they are important as they show the way the story developed in Burne-Jones' mind.

Harrison and Waters Burne-Jones (London 1979) 144 make interesting observations on the general attitude of later Victorian artists to their work; they see the theme of renunciation of material wealth in favour of an ideal of beauty as being at the heart of the attraction of many ancient legends, as well as the Holy Grail stories. They continue:

"On a higher level they saw scientific materialism destroying the imaginative power. So accentuating the power of the mind, i.e. the creation of beauty, which did not accept the world as it appears, they gave it full play to interpret, transfigure or even reject external appearance. Morris's verse play 'Love is Enough' deals with a king who gives up his kingdom for love; 'Pygmalion and the Image' is a variation of the theme in which the sculptor, disillusioned with his contemporaries, falls in love with a figure he has fashioned - an even more direct symbol."

This is not to say that artists such as Burne-Jones were not fully aware of the limitations of their art in the real world. Burne-Jones expressed great spiritual longing in his pictures but he quite realised that they represented "another world" into which he could not pass. A cartoon he drew for a young friend (British Museum, pen and ink 1883) perfectly illustrates this point. "The artist attempting to join the world of art with disastrous (sic) results" shows Burne-Jones in despair trying to leap into a picture he is painting, only to find himself crashing through it. It is significant that the painting appears to be one of the "Briar Rose" sequence; the

artist obviously longed for the peaceful oblivion of eternal sleep¹. However, Burne-Jones realised the hopelessness of his desire to enter "the world of art". In the cartoon he fails completely and, in fact only ruins the painting in the process. It is important to remember this when considering his interpretation of "Pygmalion".

The first picture in each of the sequences ("The Heart Desires") shows Pygmalion obviously musing on the possibility of creating his ideal statue. The Birmingham painting is full of information to be picked up by the knowledgeable viewer. In the background on the right is a group of three naked female statues, two with their arms around each other and one slightly separate. These statues fulfil two purposes; they immediately indicate Pygmalion's profession and they also represent the art which he has rejected as imperfect. The marble maidens are balanced on the left-hand side of the work by a pair of living girls, glancing in as they pass by. The balance is perfect because the two real women mirror exactly the pose of the two naked statues on the far right. If it were not for the wall, they would be facing each other (perhaps another example of Burne-Jones' love of reflections).

The living women obviously represent the creations of nature which have also been rejected by Pygmalion (as the Propoetides were in Ovid's tale). The attitudes of the three statues are clearly those of the Three Graces, Venus' handmaidens who were frequently used as a brothel sign throughout Renaissance Europe (see Boardman Greek Art London 1964, 265). There exists a drawing by Burne-Jones (now in Carlisle Art Gallery) called "The Three Graces" which shows the maidens in exactly this pose (cf. also the Nymphs in "Perseus in the Garden of the Nymphs"). Just as the living women represent the Propoetides in the flesh, so the statues could represent the Propoetides in stone. The influence of the goddess Venus is also expressed, not only in the statues of her handmaidens but also in the branch of myrtle, an attribute of Venus carried by one of the living girls.

Pygmalion stands between the two groups of rejected females,

further emphasising the perfect balance of the composition. His head is similar to that of a Venetian boy in the Renaissance paintings so much admired by Burne-Jones; the influence of the Italian Masters, particularly Mantegna, is also evident in the drapery of his long robe². The effect is strangely androgynous and perhaps slightly disturbing for the modern spectator. This is a feature of Burne-Jones' style. All his male figures tend to have equally beautiful faces for he was only concerned to depict beauty. The model for Pygmalion was in fact Mr. W.A. Benson, whose sister posed as Medusa³.

As Pygmalion stands and ponders, he has his back turned on the living women and the outside world, reminding us of the small internal world he chooses to inhabit. The impression of separation from real life created by the deliberate inclusion of scenes outside the door is enhanced by Burne-Jones' technique of using architecture to create barriers which cannot be breached. His paintings are filled with steps, door and arches, windows and distant buildings, all of which remind us of "the worlds beyond". He tantalises us with glimpses of areas which we cannot enter, which are forever elusive; the enclosed nature of Pygmalion's world is a direct contrast to this "infinite beyond".

We have already noted Burne-Jones' great interest in reflections (cf. the Perseus Cycle). In this painting the floor is strangely patterned with reflections of the statues' limbs. The introduction of this motif could be meant to indicate that the statues themselves are reflections of real women (cf. the way they mirror the women outside)⁴. In any case, the artist's obsession with mirrored images of all types is quite compatible with his general artistic concern. He was full of longing himself, just as his figures seem to be, but realised that this "higher state" after which he yearned was eternally elusive. In a sense he saw life as an illusion, just as his "other world" was, and his concern with appearance and reality is given expression in the reflection motif. In the Pygmalion story it is, of course, particularly apt because the sculptor rejects reality in favour of something which has only the appearance of reality and,

moreover, of a reality which does not exist (that is, ideal beauty). The reflections and shadows in Pygmalion's studio emphasise the illusion he has created for himself in his inner world. The real world of solid objects is outside with the living girls.

It is interesting that Burne-Jones chooses to illuminate the statues with shafts of light from some window outside the picture yet has greatly subdued their outlines. The real girls are drawn equally softly and as a result the figure of Pygmalion is thrown into dramatic relief in the foreground. His lines are hard and clear, the only softness being about his pensive eyes. A glance at the bottom left-hand corner of the painting shows the reason for his musing. Burne-Jones, with his love of artistic symbols, has included there a myrtle branch and an unrolled scroll, presumably containing a love-poem. These two symbols of love indicate the direction of Pygmalion's thoughts.

The corresponding picture in the Setton collection contains much the same background of pillars and arches, although Pygmalion's trade is indicated more definitely by the inclusion of chisels and pieces of stone in the bottom right-hand corner. There are no reflections on the floor which has an altogether more solid appearance. The major difference, however, occurs in the composition of the two groups of female figures. Instead of three statues, there are two groups of two; all the figures are staring at Pygmalion, just like an audience. In each pair of statues the figures are leaning on one another. The figure on the far left is standing in exactly the same attitude as the single statue in the picture from the second series. Their poses are very naturalistic and their gaze focuses attention on the central figure of Pygmalion but there is no relationship between the statues and the real girls passing by, so the overall balance of the composition is diminished.

The maidens at the door are crowned with myrtle and are positioned further to the left than in the Birmingham version, creating a visual gap which is perhaps a weakness. They are dressed in the same kind of robes but the colours are different. In fact, the whole

painting is considerably darker in tone than the second version. It has a yellowy veneer which is reminiscent of the darkened canvas of an Old Master. Pygmalion looks rather like a monk; his robe is dark-green and apparently has a cowl. His face is tougher and more sculpted; his profile is strong and lacks the soft cheeks of the later picture. The overall effect is more obviously masculine and the face is actually illuminated by a shaft of light. The branch and the scroll (with the letters "E.B.J. 1868" painted on it) are included.

This painting lacks the subtle power of the second version. The overall presentation of the scene is the same but its balance and composition is weaker. By making his message less obvious (the different arrangement of the statues, the absence of myrtle wreaths and work debris on the floor), Burne-Jones has made the second version more intriguing and intellectually stimulating, as well as improving its aesthetic appeal.

The second of the four scenes in the series is entitled "The Hand Refrains". Again, the Birmingham picture is full of detail to delight and intrigue the eye. The sculpture is now completed, and Pygmalion contemplates his work. Fitzgerald 175 remarks that Burne-Jones' colours "were combinations of the inner mind" and it is certainly true that he uses tone rather than strong colour. This gives his paintings an intellectual subtlety lacking in, say, the work of Ford Madox Brown or William Holman Hunt, both of whom employ vivid greens, pinks and blues to great dramatic effect (see, for example, "The Last of England" or "The Hireling Shepherd"). However, in "The Hand Refrains" Burne-Jones introduces strong tones of blue and red⁵ into the figure of Pygmalion, tones all the more dramatic when compared with those in the other two pictures in which Pygmalion appears; in these his robes are greenish-grey. Perhaps the sculptor has changed into his "Sunday best" for the festival of Venus. There is a great contrast between the (relatively) lively, colourful figure of Pygmalion and the ghostly-white statue of the girl.

The background is again filled with endless vistas, rooms,

windows and continually changing levels, both inside and out. On the left, seen through an open window, are the figures of other people; two are chatting and behind them is a general crowd of humanity going about on a holiday. All are quite oblivious of Pygmalion's personal drama and he is unaware of them (cf. Morris's treatment of Andromeda's story). Like the girls in the first painting, these figures represent the "real" world as opposed to the inner world of Pygmalion's imagination.

Through the other window in the right background a spout of water falls from some kind of carved head and fills a stone bowl, from where it pours in an endless stream to the ground. Trees and flowers can also be seen. Beneath the same window, inside, stands an elaborately-decorated chest, another example of the way the artist teases his audience; what can be inside it? Steps lead off to the right but we do not know what lies that way nor can we see round the corner behind Pygmalion. The glass in the window and the cornice behind the statue's head are intricately detailed. There is even a slim chisel lying forgotten and unnoticed at the sculptor's feet. It is a measure of Burne-Jones' great skill that, despite the enormous amount of background detail in the picture, its overall composition is clear; he always maintains complete control over the balance and proportions of his work.

The figures of Pygmalion and the statue dominate the foreground. Pygmalion is looking pensive, even troubled, and his sad eyes gaze into the middle distance as so often in Burne-Jones' work. The title of the picture gives the reason. Pygmalion wants to touch and caress his statue but he dare not. Of course, "The Hand Refrains" could be taken to refer merely to the recent completion of the sculpture but a combination of both meanings is more satisfactory, particularly in view of the Ovidian original which Burne-Jones undoubtedly knew. The sculptor's hand hesitates by his mouth, on the point of reaching out perhaps. The fact that the statue has only just been finished is indicated by the tools still in Pygmalion's hands. The floor is also littered with pieces of stone and abandoned tools. Burne-Jones has captured a moment in time, the moment when Pygmalion first realises

the full beauty of his creation. The encapsulation of a moment like this is, of course, a typical aim of Pre-Raphaelite painting (cf. "The Rescue of Andromeda"), a fact apparently not appreciated by those who criticise Burne-Jones' work for lifelessness and inactivity.

The statue is startlingly white. She seems to lean towards Pygmalion as he steps back, drawing the audience's eye to her. Her pose is of particular interest because it is exactly the same as that of the renamed Aphrodite of Cnidos (see Richter Handbook of Greek Art plate 187 for illustration). The only difference, and a very minor one, is the fact that this statue has her hair down whereas the Aphrodite wears hers up on top of her head. By choosing deliberately to portray Pygmalion's statue in this way Burne-Jones must have intended an identification to be made between the two. He, like Ovid, seems to have realised that the statue was not merely one of a girl but was of Venus herself, the epitome of female beauty. Burne-Jones appears to have had a deeper understanding of the real significance of the Ovidian tale than might at first be imagined.

The hands and feet of the statue are extremely graceful and the smoothness of its body is contrasted with the carved braids of hair lying across the head. The eyes are quite blank and sightless; as yet there is no spark of life in them. The statue's already dramatic appearance is enhanced by Burne-Jones' use of the light coming through the window behind; it illuminates the figure as a spot-light would. It is, of course, important that the statue should draw our eyes in this way so that we can experience the same fascination and attraction that Pygmalion is feeling.

Burne-Jones' great skill in the composition of pictures is shown by the way in which the painting seems to fall quite naturally into two halves, each containing a dominant figure. On the left stands Pygmalion, representing the warmth and life of humanity. There are people in the background, giving it a sense of activity. The tones are reds and blues, vigorous and lively, and there is texture in the wood and cloth. It is noticeable that even the buildings, which

must have been stone, are given softness and warmth by being painted in tones of pink. On the right of the picture stands the statue, smooth and white. The tones are all of green and white, very cool, and the sense of lifelessness is enhanced by the complete lack of a human background. The only texture is of stone and water, again cold and light. Thus the two opposites, warm flesh and cold stone, are contrasted as they confront one another.

The Paris version of the scene has a similar background, though darker. However, there are only two separate standing figures; the relaxed gossipers and crowd behind them are missing. As a result the Paris picture lacks the sense of a real, human world as a backdrop to Pygmalion's personal drama. Indeed, the relative isolation of the two figures from each other tends to give the impression that all humanity is essentially lonely, like Pygmalion. While Burne-Jones felt acutely the isolation and loneliness of the human condition, he must have realised when he came to paint the second version that it was more important to emphasise the inner, secret nature of Pygmalion's imagination and the personal world in which the drama takes place (as, of course, Ovid does). There is less detail altogether in the first version of the scene; Burne-Jones does not include the bench and tools in the left foreground, there are no trees in the left background and the drapery on the window-sill is omitted.

Although Pygmalion's clothes are of course different, his pose is exactly the same as in the first picture, whereas the other main figure, the statue, differs greatly from the Birmingham version. She is standing on a large stool rather than a conventional stone pedestal and there is little debris on the floor, which is of course inconsistent with the statue's being newly completed. Her pose is entirely changed, a most important difference. This statue has her eyes closed and her head inclined to one side; she appears to be in some kind of reverie. Her position is identical with that of the first statue on the left of the group in "The Heart Desires" (both versions). This is certainly not the stance of the Aphrodite of Cnidos and shows that Burne-Jones thought most carefully about the

story between his first and second attempts at illustrating it. The change is dramatic and deliberate; clearly Burne-Jones was aware of the significance of the statue's position.

The third scene depicted in the series, "The Godhead Fires", shows the vivification of the statue by Venus while Pygmalion is absent. This process has, it is clear, just occurred for the statue is no longer stone but warm flesh. In the Birmingham picture, Venus is fetchingly attired in a transparent robe which enhances rather than conceals her form. As is usual in Burne-Jones' work, the details of the composition reveal much to the informed spectator. Venus wears a garland of myrtle on her head and carries a branch of the same plant in her hand. Myrtle is, as has been noted, one of the attributes of this goddess in art and literature and symbolises eternal love. To the Renaissance, its evergreen branches in particular represented conjugal fidelity (Hall 219) but it was also considered sacred to Venus in antiquity and was, moreover, the attribute of her handmaidens, the Three Graces. The real branches of myrtle in this scene are reflected in the carvings on the pillars and the frieze around the top of the wall.

Venus is attended by a train of doves, two of which carry red roses in their beaks. There are also roses scattered in front of the statue. This flower is another symbol of the goddess. The story is that it was originally white and turned red when it was stained with Venus' blood as she rushed up to help the dying Adonis and accidentally stood on a thorn (another tale set in Cyprus, of course). Thus the two sides of Venus are represented; myrtle symbolising the evergreen, eternal quality of love and the red rose for passion⁶. The goddess' origins are also made clear; she is hovering over a pool of water to denote her birth from the sea. Her divinity is manifest in the aura above her head. Burne-Jones' clever use of symbolic details conveys all necessary information to his viewer without detracting in any way from the beauty of the composition.

The goddess has just brought the statue to life. Her

index finger is still outstretched as if it had touched the girl only the moment before. In the previous painting the statue was leaning forward and the movement has apparently been maintained as she comes to life. She is leaning on Venus' outstretched arm as though she had pitched forward at the moment of her "birth" and needed to be steadied. The face of the statue-girl betrays no emotion but she gazes unswervingly into the face of the goddess. It is noticeable that even Venus, goddess of love, wears an expression of wistful longing; Burne-Jones could not conceive of any other, particularly in the context of love.

The statue stands on a pedestal of wood and stone now, unlike the hewn stone of the previous scene. Pygmalion's presence is felt, although he is not depicted, in the inclusion of his work-table behind the statue. The background is filled with mysterious staircases, windows and buildings half-glimpsed, constant reminders of the world outside. The tones of blue and red which occupied half of the previous painting to such good effect have now spread and suffuse the whole of "The Godhead Fires", emphasising the life which has been created and the miracle which has taken place.

In the first version of this scene Burne-Jones has tried to tell more of the story. As well as the vivification of the statue, he also includes Pygmalion in the background and shows the sculptor's role in the miracle. Through a door behind Venus we can see that Pygmalion is praying to a statue (obviously of Venus), asking for "one like his ivory maiden". It is interesting that Burne-Jones not only includes this scene, thus demonstrating his full knowledge of the Ovidian tale, but he even takes care to include a fire just behind the kneeling sculptor. Ovid tells us how the goddess conveys her acceptance of Pygmalion's prayer by making the flames at her altar flare up three times; evidently Burne-Jones is alluding to this detail. Presumably he would also have known that in the Ovidian tale it is Pygmalion who touches the maiden and, apparently, brings her to life. Of course, Ovid makes it clear that Venus is the true agent of the statue's transformation even though she is not physically

present at the scene. Burne-Jones chooses to show the goddess in person bringing the statue to life, the only way that her part in the metamorphosis can be expressed in a painting.

Apart from the inclusion of Pygmalion at the altar, the background of the Paris version is very similar to its successor. The mysterious stairs are included, as is the carved and draped pillar to the left of Venus. However, Venus' doves are fewer and do not form a train behind her. She herself is, decently clad in a robe of dark green, the same colour worn by Pygmalion throughout the scenes (and, incidentally, the same colour as myrtle), and her hair and that of the statue is noticeably redder than in the Birmingham picture. Red hair was, of course, one of the hall-marks of a Pre-Raphaelite woman (Lizzie Siddal, Rossetti's wife, was renowned for her glorious red locks). The arrangement of the limbs of the two figures is rather different. Venus does not carry a myrtle branch so both her arms are stretched out to the statue. Their arms, in fact, form an arch through which the kneeling Pygmalion can be seen. This painting is less ethereal than the later one; the colours are darker, Venus' robe is not transparent and the inclusion of the altar scene in the background makes the picture more crowded, though not necessarily less effective.

The climax of the story, Pygmalion's discovering his now-living statue, is shown in "The Soul Attains". The two versions of this scene are remarkably similar not only in overall composition but also in background detail. The theme of "other worlds" continues with extensive use of pillars, staircases and half-glimpsed buildings to create an endless number of new vistas. There is a touch of vivid colour in the inclusion of a large clump of red and white flowers, seen through the door behind Pygmalion (colours perhaps included to recall the pink and white beauty of the goddess). In the Birmingham picture there is also a round glass on the wall behind the couple, another example of Burne-Jones' obsession with the notion of reflections⁷. The drapery which hangs down behind the statue-maiden is in exactly the same colours as the robe worn by Pygmalion in "The Hand Refrains". The sculptor himself, kneeling before the girl, is now dressed in a robe in the same tones as seen in the first

painting, "The Heart Desires". In this way Burne-Jones creates a strong sense of continuity and balance (cf. Giotto's use of background in "Joachim Retires to the Sheepfold" and "The Sacrifice of Joachim") and the final picture is in every sense a culmination of what has gone before.

The foreground is filled with the figures of the girl and Pygmalion. He is kneeling before her and gazes up in wonder while she stands and stares passively into the middle distance. There is a strong undercurrent of eroticism in the painting, the girl being completely naked and Pygmalion swathed in robes. There is a vividly conveyed air of tension about the crouching figure of the sculptor, particularly in the slightly awkward position of his neck and shoulders. He is leaning forward as far as he can and staring upwards slightly but he does not actually move. He has obviously just dropped to his knees and seized the girl's hands, pulling them towards him with suppressed fervour⁸.

The title of this final painting not only reflects Burne-Jones' own endless "soul-searching" but also seems to imply the total satisfaction of passion, beyond the "Heart" of the first picture. But what of the statue? Her feelings are unknown. She stands and stares musingly into the distance. Her expression could signify the fact that she is effectively new-born and has no comprehension of what is happening. However, such an expression seems more like resignation, passive acquiescence in her fate, and her vivification raises an important problem. When she was a statue, her beauty (the object of Pygmalion's passion) was eternal. Now she is human, it will fade as she grows older. This problem must have occurred to Burne-Jones, who was himself obsessed with the idea of (young) female beauty.

Art is generally used to transform human, transient loveliness into eternal beauty: this is the task which Burne-Jones set himself. Yet in the story of Pygmalion the sequence is reversed. A work of eternal beauty is brought to life and must, therefore, ultimately

undergo decay and extinction. The cartoon "The artist attempting to join the world of art with disastrous (sic) results" shows that Burne-Jones realised the impossibility of such an attempt. The Pygmalion series (which pre-dates the cartoon) seems to explore the opposite possibility, a work of art entering human life. Although he called the final picture in the series "The Soul Attains", we must not assume that Burne-Jones found a satisfactory answer to his desire for constant beauty in his life. His recurring fantasy about entering the world of art shows the opposite to be true.

Fortunée de Lisle (Burne-Jones London 1904) calls the Pygmalion series "a sequence of thought on human aspiration" and subtitles the pictures in the following way:

1. The Prologue - Pygmalion thinks of the ideal.
2. The Limitation of Human Power - Pygmalion realises he can do no more.
3. The Completion of the Human Work by Divine Power.
4. Human Aspiration attains Divine Realisation.

Yet, even so, the final painting is acknowledged to have a "sense of the unattainable, that hint of the infinite beyond". This analysis, though suggestive, does not explain the paintings fully. There is no evidence that Burne-Jones placed any particular importance on "divine power" in art and such a "Christian" interpretation cannot really be substantiated. It is certainly possible to argue that the "divine power" could be seen as artistic genius, the inspiration which makes one artist greater than another, but once again there is no proof that Burne-Jones held any such view.

It is important not to be misled by the titles of the works; it has already been noted that the last scene, though called "The Soul attains" does not convey a sense of total fulfilment. Although one must beware of being superficial, it is perhaps best to view the Pygmalion series as one of the artist's many attempts to express his pursuit of the "other world", the "something" he longed for all his life but apparently never attained. His quest for spiritual fulfilment, his love of beauty and understanding of its transience, his belief in

the power of the imagination and of love over material things, his ultimate feeling of frustration; all these elements can be found in the pictures.

It is reasonable to assume that Burne-Jones felt some sort of identification with Pygmalion, concerned as they both were with the creation of perfection through art. However, Burne-Jones in no way rejected the beauty of the women around him. His aim was to create perfect Art by the reproduction of their beauty and to preserve it for eternity. Pygmalion, on the other hand, used perfect Art to create his ideal of beauty which, by becoming mortal at his request, was doomed to be destroyed. It is difficult to believe that Burne-Jones would have had much sympathy for such behaviour and this may partly account for the sense of unease generated in the last scene.

NOTES

1. The next stage would seem to be his identification with the doomed Arthur in "Arthur in Avalon", a character who does indeed sleep eternally (those in the "Briar Rose" series are, of course, eventually woken).
2. Burne-Jones lists his favourite Italian painters, after his third trip to Italy, as follows: "... now I care most for Michael Angelo, Luca Signorelli, Mantegna, Giotto, Botticelli, Andrea del Sarto, Paolo Uccello, and Piero della Francesca".
(G.B-J. Volume 2. 26)
3. The story, told by his wife and reported by Fitzgerald, is that Burne-Jones was at the theatre when he spotted Miss Benson and her mother. He approached them and asked if the young lady would sit for him as she had the perfect head for Medusa. Apparently, her mother was not at all surprised and commented that she was always called her "Burne-Jones daughter".
(G.B-J. Volume 2 80-81, Fitzgerald 172)
4. Cf. the Platonic view of art which maintained that the artist only makes the appearance of an object, not the reality and truth of it. Plato even uses the example of a mirror to describe this effect (see Republic 10. 596 D, E)

Ovid does not seem to have subscribed to such a view. He even reverses the idea in his description of the cave of Diana (M3.158-159) which he claims was an example of nature imitating art.
5. Note that blue and red were the favourite colours of William Morris, who also used them for particular dramatic effect in his fabrics and tapestries. As Deryn O'Connor explains in William Morris and Kelmscott (The Design Council, 1981) 107, "These colours seem to represent richness, generosity and honesty for Morris". In fact, he had to struggle for a long time before he could overcome the technical problems which originally prevented the use of these colours, particularly in printed cottons, and it is a measure of his love for them that he pursued the task so vigorously.
6. Burne-Jones was deeply interested in the symbolism of flowers and even created a book illustrating the significance of many types (The Flower Book, now in the British Museum).
7. The mirror could also be interpreted as a link with the goddess Venus, who is no longer physically present but whose power is very much in evidence. Renaissance allegory sometimes identified the mirror with Venus, whose attribute it was in classical times. Burne-Jones himself used this theme in his picture "The Mirror of Venus" (now in a private collection in Cumbria) cf. Athene's mirror in "The Arming of Perseus".
8. Richard Jenkyns (The Victorians and Ancient Greece {Oxford 1980} 141 ff.) is mistaken in his interpretation of the whole series

in general and this painting in particular. His remarks betray a total lack of sympathy with Burne-Jones' work. Pygmalion is not "gazing up at her marmoreal breasts"; his line of sight is clearly directed at her face. Moreover, the dark shadows around his eyes, as well as the set of his jaw, betray a passion obviously not appreciated by Jenkyns, who cries "but what of the body?" He continues:

"Burne-Jones worked on these paintings at a time when he was emotionally entangled with his model Maria Zambaco; she, like the mythical Pygmalion, was a Greek, and her southern temperament proved too exhausting for her admirer, who soon relapsed into married bliss. This episode may contain the clue to the Pygmalion paintings".

His assertion that Pygmalion was Greek is, of course, inaccurate. Pygmalion was the Phoenician king of Cyprus. It is certainly true that Burne-Jones was "emotionally entangled" with Maria (who herself became a sculptress) between 1868 and 1871 and their relationship was not smooth. He used her as a model for many paintings, most significantly perhaps as "Beatrice". The first of the illustrations for Morris's The Earthly Paradise, was indeed painted from 1868 to 1870 but the second series was not finished until 1878, seven years after the end of this "affair" (Jenkyns reproduces "The Hand Refrains" and "The Soul Attains" from the second series in his book; presumably, therefore, his remarks are directed at these versions rather than the earlier paintings, which he passes over in silence). Moreover, it must be remembered that the first series was painted for Mrs. Cassavetti, Maria's mother. It seems unlikely that Burne-Jones should choose to make a statement about his relationship with the daughter in a series of pictures to be hung in the mother's house.

Jenkyns' thesis is not valid for either of the two series. A better clue to the way Burne-Jones felt about his liaison with Maria can perhaps be found in the painting "Phyllis and Demophoön", now owned by Birmingham City Art Gallery. This picture, executed in 1870, shows Demophoön struggling fearfully to free himself from the loving embrace of Phyllis, who is entwining herself around him.

Jenkyns is aware that the pictures "depict the realisation of a sexual fantasy" but does not seem to give Burne-Jones credit for a similar awareness. He calls the series "anaemic and abashed" and criticises the texture of the living statue's skin as "unpleasantly bloodless, unnaturally smooth; unlike living flesh, and more like wax than marble". Such remarks indicate a poor acquaintance with the artist's nude paintings. A comparison with, say, the larger version of "Phyllis and Demophoön" entitled "The Tree of Forgiveness" (Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight) clearly shows that this was Burne-Jones' style when rendering naked flesh, male and female. In any case, surely the state described by Jenkyns is exactly suited to the subject-matter; the stone softening but not quite flesh yet.

He concludes by condemning the paintings thus:

"the subject is overtly erotic (one would suppose), but the treatment is terribly tame".

While Burne-Jones' treatment is certainly not "overtly erotic" (he would never have wished it so), there is nonetheless an undercurrent of eroticism present. For example, the last painting shows a totally naked, passive "new-born" girl and a fully-clothed, passionate young man, surely an erotic scene in anyone's view (for a view similar to Jenkyns see the Arts Council catalogue for its exhibition of Burne-Jones' work in 1975, 54).

4

"Pygmalion and the Image" by William Morris

The story of Pygmalion is one of the pair of tales for the month of August (the other being "Ogier the Dane"). The setting is important because August is the month of harvest, of "fulfilment of the year's desire". This suggests that Morris saw the story as one of a passion brought to fruition. However, harvest also marks the end of the natural cycle and leads to the dead season of winter. The whole of The Earthly Paradise is concerned with the question of death. The Wanderers are trying to find immortality on earth and their preoccupation with death and its avoidance reflects Morris's own personal conflict. Consequently, even at the moment of fulfilment, Morris cannot help pondering the sadness of the end of the process. He reminds his readers that from this point, the path goes downhill:

"The tall wheat, coloured by the August fire
Grew heavy-headed, dreading its decay,
And blacker grew the elm-trees day by day".

One should not assume that Morris is wholly sympathetic towards Pygmalion's situation. He indicates quite the opposite in the introduction:

"Ah, love! such happy days, such days as these,
Must we still waste them, craving for the best,
Like lovers o'er the painted images

Of those who once their yearning hearts have blessed?"

The reference to lovers craving for painted images seems to be an obvious criticism of Pygmalion; it is, after all, exactly what he did. Morris's view appears to be that endless yearning after superhuman perfection is a waste of time and shows an inability to appreciate the true value of life. Nor is he sympathetic towards those who continue to yearn for what they have lost; one must look forward, not back.

The Earthly Paradise has been interpreted as a kind of commentary upon the rather unsatisfactory marriage of Morris to Jane Burden¹, which was indeed going through a particularly turbulent period at the time of writing the poem (Janey's relationship with Rossetti

flowered during this time). While this may be an extreme position to take, it is clear that Morris's personal situation must have had some effect upon his art. It would be quite natural for him, faced with the failure of his own marriage, to be sceptical of the possibility of enduring love. However, he is not at all self-pitying and can describe the joys of love most vividly, albeit with a tinge of sadness.

It is interesting that Morris should include "Pygmalion and the Image" in The Earthly Paradise, his personal attempt to come to terms with death. It is, after all, a story about the loss of immortality; the statue loses her chance of eternal life when she is made human. However, her immortality is not of a type desired by the Wanderers². It is preferable to be human and mortal rather than to exist as an inanimate object; that is no answer to the problem of death. In fact Morris seems to believe, despite his fear of dying, that perhaps life is sweet just because it must eventually end. The knowledge that it cannot last forever gives present pleasure an intensity it would not otherwise possess and makes pain endurable. (cf. Perseus' speech to Andromeda on the sea-shore). The statue has been given a great gift when she is given life. Perhaps we are meant to realise that we too possess that gift and should appreciate it as such, instead of yearning for the impossible (as the Wanderers do)³.

It seems natural that the story of Pygmalion should appeal to Morris, concerned as he was with good craftsmanship and its place in everyday life. He gave many lectures and addresses on the subject⁴, his opinions obviously being strongly affected by his Socialism. He was in no doubt about the central importance of art in all men's lives, not just those rich enough to be patrons. He declared: "You cannot educate, you cannot civilize men, unless you can give them a share in art"⁵. The monopoly of works of art by a privileged few was abhorrent to him, and the presence of art and beauty in the everyday life of all people was essential to his vision of a Socialist future. He saw commercialism as the great enemy. In order to maximise profits, employers would force their workers ("slaves" according to Morris) to produce more and more. There is no place for craftsmanship when profit

is the driving force.

Morris was also sympathetic to the views of Ruskin about the relationship between artist and creation. He felt strongly that only happy men could create true works of art and that the freedom essential to the happiness of the creator was impossible to achieve within the Victorian capitalist system: "We are driven at last, then, to this conclusion: that pleasure and interest in the work itself are necessary to the production of a work of art however humble; that this pleasure and interest can only be present when the workman is free in his work, i.e. is conscious of producing a piece of goods suitable to his own needs as a healthy man; that the present system of industrial production does not allow of the existence of such free workmen consciously producing wares for themselves and their neighbours, and forbids the general public to ask for wares made by such men."⁶

It could be argued that there is a difference between the production of handcrafts, such as pottery and textiles, and the creation of works of fine art, such as paintings or sculpture. However, it is quite clear that Morris himself saw no such difference and applied the same rules to the production of all art.⁷ In fact, he strongly disapproved of attempts to differentiate between branches of art and had the utmost contempt for the snobbery of many "patrons of fine art". "I take it that it is only as a matter of convenience that we separate painting and sculpture from applied art: for in effect the synonym for applied art is architecture, and I should say that painting is of little use, and sculpture of less, except where their works form a part of architecture ... As for sculpture, it becomes a mere toy, a tour de force, when it is not definitely a part of a building, executed for a certain height from the eye and to be seen in a certain light"⁸.

We can assume from this that Morris would have approved of Pygmalion's statues in general for they were executed with great love and craftsmanship for the glory of the deity concerned and were available to the public (as, for example, in the case of the statue of Venus used in the annual procession). Even the "Image" of the title is

subject to this set of values. Pygmalion has the statue set in a "fair niche" in his bedroom and thus she would become part of the architecture of the room.

The only readily available source for the Pygmalion story was the Metamorphoses. Morris follows Ovid closely, using the episode in Metamorphoses 10 as a framework within which to create his own version reflecting his own beliefs and attitudes. He begins by setting the scene exactly, at Amathus on the southern coast of Cyprus (cf. M.10.220). His Pygmalion is a famous sculptor whose works were usually of the gods. We are told that he wrought "most godlike works in imagery", a double reference perhaps to his skill and his subject-matter⁹. However, his skill brings him no joy because he has no maiden to love. All the women about him have been cursed by Venus and now "carry lust for love" (cf. M.10. 238-240). Morris describes the Propoetides plying their trade with the merchants at the harbour. As a result of this lack of love in his life, Pygmalion loses all joy in living and finds that not even his skill can wholly comfort him.

Because of his deep interest in craftsmanship Morris greatly expands the episode of the actual creation of the statue. There is a strongly personal note in his discussion of the psychology of the artist, and it seems reasonable to assume that Morris also sought comfort in his art when his own intimate life was disrupted. He points out to the reader that although an artist may at times despair of his imperfect work and of life in general, it is to his art that he turns when he wants to forget these cares. Note that both Ovid's and Morris's Pygmalion actually use their art to solve their problem (the question of the perfect woman to love). Morris's description of the sculptor's reluctance to begin work is similarly realistic. The ambiguous relationship between artist and art is clearly expressed:

"And with a sigh his wonted toil begin,
Half-loathed, half-loved, a little rest to win."

The image that he is working on is a woman because when he first saw the stone, that was the shape it seemed to contain. Already

there is a hint of a metamorphosis in the reference to the "wandering veins" in the stone. Spontaneously Pygmalion cries out to Venus and promises that the statue will be hers, a touch of dramatic irony as the statue does indeed become Venus' handmaiden but not at all in the way that Pygmalion imagines. The description of the myrtle-shade "quivering" introduces a slightly erotic tone and reminds us of what Venus represents. In fact the goddess intervenes very early in Morris's story. She inspires the sculptor in his craft, leading the reader to suspect that she has already decided upon the outcome of the tale. The fact that Pygmalion has this special relationship with her, shown both by his prayer and by the statue of her he carved for the procession, gives a reason for her to help him so much, a reason not evident in Ovid.

However, Morris sounds a note of pessimism in his references to "the first artificer" who "made the gift that woe to all men brought," certain references to Hephaestos, creator of Pandora. She did indeed bring woe to all men for it was she who let all the cares of the world out of their jar. Morris here gives a hint about his attitude to love, a theme which he expands at the end of the story. Love, like life, is not a wholly joyful experience; it contains much pain and trouble as well. Morris has been accused of writing escapist literature but in fact he is unfailingly realistic, always seeing the dark side of life as well as its positive aspects¹⁰. His reference to Pandora reminds his audience of the far-reaching consequences of Pygmalion's action. By turning away from the women around him and creating his own ideal, the sculptor does not protect himself from all future pain.

At first Pygmalion does not concentrate on his work, but dreams and worries about his life instead. He hardly even notices what his hands are doing. Gradually, however, he becomes engrossed and concentrates only on the practising of his art. As the statue forms, he is filled with joy at his craft. Until now he seems to be behaving normally and the process described by Morris could be applied to any art or craft; the reluctance to start, the gradual development of interest and the final intense excitement about the act of creation. However, together with his quite proper pride in his achievement (pride

in one's work was vital, according to Morris) comes a disturbing desire "he could not name". Pygmalion becomes obsessed with the statue, taking no pleasure in anything else as he should. His own behaviour disturbs him and he resolves to get away from the statue, to go out into the woods and then to carve a statue of Hercules. It is significant that he should choose Hercules, the epitome of masculinity just as the statue is the epitome of womanhood.

The journey into the countryside is described in idyllic terms. Morris was particularly fond of the country, especially wooded areas (he was brought up in Epping Forest when it was still relatively unspoilt). The scene is one of joyous activity on the part of both man and beast but Pygmalion finds no solace and returns to the city to "cast his heart into the hands of fate". The importance placed on fate by Morris has already been noted in the Perseus story. Acceptance of fate involves acceptance of death and Morris saw both as essential for a profitable life, although he had to struggle towards such acceptance himself. This may partly account for the great love of the Norse sagas which he developed over the years. Their heroes knew that death was inevitable, and therefore concentrated on living the best (as they saw it) life possible in the circumstances. It seems likely, therefore, that Morris would be sympathetic towards Pygmalion's whole-hearted commitment to his own fate.

The "strange desire" has begun to flame higher and higher in Pygmalion's heart¹¹. The reader suddenly realises that already the sculptor is thinking of the statue as though it were alive; he exclaims aloud about the possibility of her being gone when he returns to his house. However, Morris's Pygmalion is aware that his feelings are wrong and blushes at his own madness, unlike Ovid's Pygmalion who shows no concern whatever about his own state of mind. One can only conclude that Morris himself found the idea disturbing and attempts to make the sculptor more morally acceptable by emphasising his internal conflict.

There is irony in the fact that what Pygmalion only imagines at this stage (the statue being gone) actually happens later. Knowing

this, the reader tends to be sympathetic towards Pygmalion and this sympathy is greatly increased by Morris's sensitive description of the man's agonised state of mind. Pygmalion breaks down before the statue and clings to it, weeping loudly. He then rails against it, addressing it as though it were alive despite the fact that he first acknowledges that he made it. He bitterly attacks the statue, accusing it of mocking him and likening it to those cruel beauties who delight in tormenting their devoted lovers. These women, he says, have passionate eyes which they use to lead men on "Into their net and smile to see them bleed". However, such women are made by the gods (who are presumably seen to be equally cruel) while Pygmalion himself is the creator of the statue who now "wilt not speak one little word." Note that the sculptor uses the word "wilt", not "canst". He thinks the statue is wilfully refusing to address him, a clear indication of the extent to which his delusion has overcome his reason. His internal struggle with the "strange desire" has been completely lost.

It is only now, as Pygmalion draws back to stare at his creation, that Morris actually describes the beautiful statue. Once again he returns to Ovid, using the same technique to express the realism of the image. Instead of :

"*virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,*" (M.10. 250)
Morris declares:

" ... and you had said,

Regarding it, that little did it lack

To be a living and most lovely maid."

The statue is naked and one arm is stretched out, "as to a lover". As Pygmalion carved the girl in this pose, the implication is that his amorous feelings for her began very early, although he did not realise it. In her other hand the girl is holding an over-blown rose, one of the symbols of Venus. The fact that the rose is over-blown seems significant. It could indicate the excessive, unhealthy nature of Pygmalion's passion for his creation.

As in Ovid, the actual identification of the statue is unclear. However, there are several clues which seem to indicate a

close link with Venus herself. It is even possible that Morris's statue, like Ovid's was a representation of the goddess. Apart from her perfect beauty and her carrying of one of Venus' attributes in art, there is also the assertion when Pygmalion begins his work that "At first indeed that work divine he deemed". As he has just dedicated his work to Venus, the implication is that the statue, at first at least, was intended as an image of Venus.

It seems that even if Burne-Jones tended to ignore aspects of Morris's interpretation (e.g. the position of the statue) in his supposed illustrations, Morris had his friend's artistic style very much in mind when he wrote the poem. The description of the statue's face and expression is instantly recognisable as that of a typical Burne-Jones lady. Her lips are unsmiling and her eyes, mirrors of the soul, are filled with a mixture of joy and sadness;

" ... the eyes

Seemed as if even now great love had shown

Unto them, something of its sweet surprise,

Yet saddened them with half-seen mysteries."

Moreover, she maintains a virginal appearance in the face of passion and appears to dream of eternal love. It seems quite natural that Morris would closely associate this story with his greatest friend. Burne-Jones was certainly a superlative craftsman, renowned for his portrayals of perfect female beauty. Furthermore, Morris must have known all too well the spiritual yearning which his friend suffered throughout his life, a longing for what could well be described as "love unchanged for aye". Burne-Jones, however, appears never to have found the fulfilment given to the legendary sculptor¹².

Pygmalion is now certainly treating the statue as if it were human. He stands reproachfully before it and then turns away as if to hide his grief "from her cold eyes". Her eyes are of course cold because she is marble but to Pygmalion they are also cold from lack of feeling. He now moves the statue into his bedroom; although he does not, as in Ovid, lay it on his bed, the implications of "appellatque tori sociam" are clearly present. Morris is quite

specific about Pygmalion's state of mind at this point. He calls the passion "folly" and "madness" and his new behaviour "new-born god-sent madness". This seems to imply some kind of divine intervention much earlier than in the Ovidian story, intervention which prevents Pygmalion from killing himself.

The sculptor's passion for his creation is clearly not natural or pure, as those who seek to interpret the story as a parable of artistic power would have it; it is madness, from which he is eventually delivered by some divine grace. The worst aspect is Pygmalion's awareness of his insanity. When he calls men off the street to carry the statue, he is ashamed but cannot help himself. With an effective touch of psychological realism Morris tells us how the sculptor became faint with jealousy when the men touched the statue. Now indeed we are aware of the strength of the obsession which grips him; he has lost all reason. The men themselves are quite unaware of the internal turmoil of their employer (cf. the indifference of the people of Joppa to Andromeda's fate).

Once the statue is installed in his bedroom, Pygmalion rushes to find jewellery to adorn it with. The desire to dress the image is the same as in Ovid but the fashion is rather different. Ovid uses the episode as a humorous example of the correct Ovidian way to woo a young woman and stresses the fact that the presents are inexpensive trifles. Morris is more concerned to emphasise the effect of Pygmalion's obsession upon his behaviour and so in his version the jewels are fabulously expensive. Pygmalion is obviously a very rich man, possessing a treasury which he can plunder for the statue's adornment (cf. Ovid's Pygmalion, the hero of Paphos). However, he considers nothing there good enough, "Not worthy e'en to touch her rippled hair"¹³, so he goes out to buy the best he can find. These gems, once the possessions of kings, are used to adorn the statue which, Morris emphasises, is still marble. Her neck is "senseless" and her arms are stone.

Pygmalion's behaviour is becoming increasingly bizarre.

He seems to treat the statue as a goddess, adorning it and casting himself at its feet to pray for forgiveness for leaving it (he even uses a word with religious implications here, "grace"). This is further evidence to support the notion that the statue represents Venus, an impression later strengthened when Morris describes how Pygmalion even burns incense before it. He brings fresh flowers to its feet and sets up an altar, praying to it as the smoke rises from the burning frankincense. Morris, with his love of detail, cannot resist also explaining where the altar has come from; it is an old commission from "some great man", presumably never collected.

Pygmalion is by now quite beyond reason. His compulsive behaviour is emphasised in the frequent use of the word "must" to describe it; he cannot help himself. He is quite convinced that the statue could speak to him if it wanted but will not. His pitiful speech to it lends further support to a possible identification with Venus for he now suspects himself to be the victim of some goddess, who has set her image in his heart to be loved hopelessly. By loving a divine beauty he can never attain, he is providing amusement for the gods. As in the Perseus story, they are portrayed as partisan or careless of men's fates.

The statue is described as representing "the form of immortality" and Pygmalion even ascribes to it the power to take away his life. He declares his eternal love for "The heavenly beauty that can ne'er pass by", an apparent reference to Venus, the goddess of love and female beauty. Since he is addressing the statue, they must be, to him at least, one and the same. If this is the case, then Morris is making the story more pointed than the version accessible to the Victorians in Lemprière's Classical Dictionary, which he used. If the image is of Venus, then Pygmalion's ardent worship of it would, presumably, greatly please the goddess. It would provide a good reason for her favour towards him when she vivifies the statue, a reason hardly present in the customary version. This explains the life of the statue as a reward for vague services rendered to the goddess in the past but relates to no specific act which would justify her

particular benevolence.

The image makes no reply to this impassioned prayer, a detail included by Morris to emphasise that the scene is being shown through Pygmalion's eyes (only Pygmalion would expect a reply). Similarly, the description of the maiden's "sweet grave eyes" gazing down on her lover shows that the sculptor felt she could see him. He comforts himself with words,

"Gilding the net wherein his soul was caught
With something like to hope ... "

Morris displays great skill in his presentation of the artist's mental state. He shows how the self-delusion gradually grows and emphasises the wild fluctuations of mood which are a mark of a disturbed personality. He also takes care to convey the way poor Pygmalion is effectively trapped by his own fate, without any real choice. He has tried to escape, at first by journeying into the woods and then by making various resolutions (it is implied, for example, that he would have killed himself, had not "some new-born, god sent madness" given him sufficient hope to continue). Despite all this, his madness continues to grow.

Pygmalion spends the rest of the day relatively happy, speaking to the statue and continuing to believe he is heard. However, Morris is careful not to say that the sculptor believed his statue was listening. Instead he says:

"And still he felt as something heard him speak."
This "something" could be external to the image; it could, for example, be a divine presence which Pygmalion believed he felt. He continues to behave as an impassioned lover, one moment full of praise and the next of bitter recriminations. His voice, "feeble" and "weak", indicates how he is wearing himself out with the frenzy of his unhealthy passion. He even reads to the statue stories about love, presumably to make her feel guilty. The stories he chooses to read, about "the sweetness ... Of lovers' sorrows and their tangled sin", also reveal Pygmalion's state of mind. He indulges himself in thoughts

of the sorrows of love, almost perhaps enjoying his own unhappiness.

When Pygmalion finally falls asleep, his dream, as might be expected, is a nightmare about the disappearance of his beloved. However, Morris's treatment of it is unusual. He analyses the thoughts of the sleeping man and describes how, knowing he is asleep, he tries to wake himself but cannot. This common experience is instantly recognisable. Pygmalion is so distracted that he even weeps in his sleep. Morris then vividly describes the moment of waking when the dream is forgotten and the dreamer cannot understand the tear-stains on his pillow. In an instant the memory floods back and he leaps from his bed, overcome with joy to find the statue still there. However, neither his terror nor his ecstasy have the power to make the image move and live. We are now aware that the only solution to the problem is some kind of divine intervention. Love, in this case, is not enough¹⁴.

The offering of incense to the statue is clearly now a regular ritual, morning and evening, and Pygmalion's whole day revolves around worship of the image. The remoteness of such an existence is conveyed by the phrase "scarce unhappy": Pygmalion is functioning in a kind of numbed dream. However, on the following day his fantasy (and his religious observance to the statue¹⁵) is interrupted by songs outside. We are asked to believe that Pygmalion, a servant of Venus, has completely forgotten her festal day. For such a lapse of memory to take place the artist must indeed have completely withdrawn into a fantasy world, unaware even of the day of the month. Morris is following Ovid, of course, in making the fulfilment of Pygmalion's desires occur on Venus' feast day.

The artist is drawn by the songs and, although he does not know why, the feeling is so strong that he even interrupts his prayers before the statue. This seems to be the beginning of the miracle; some divine power has begun to exert an influence over events. The beautifully dressed boys and girls of the procession are bearing an image of Venus in a golden car through the streets¹⁶. This statue

is also Pygmalion's work. The goddess is given the title "Mother of Desire", a name clearly indicating the aspect of her which concerns Pygmalion. His passion is physical desire rather than love; it cannot be otherwise because his beloved is simply a body without a mind.

The statue of Venus has been dressed in a scarlet robe encrusted with "precious things". This immediately calls to mind the scene in which Pygmalion adorned his new creation; the similarity is heightened by Morris's description of these gems as "Most fit to be the prize of striving kings". The jewels bought by Pygmalion for his own statue were "gems that kings for no good deed had lost". This seems to establish a link between the earlier statue of Venus, now being borne in the procession, and the new statue which might also have begun at least as an image of the goddess.

Suddenly Pygmalion recalls the festival held three times a year and Venus' legendary kindness towards lovers. He kisses the statue's feet (another gesture with religious implications) and sets off to follow the procession. He already has some idea of what he is going to ask and a vague vision of his passion's fulfilment for Morris declares:

" ... his heart with many thoughts waxed hot "

Pygmalion follows "as the goddess led", implying not only that he was following the statue in the procession but also that he was actually being directed by the goddess. The procession seems to last a very long time, at least to the impatient lover; Morris's description of the flowers dedicated to the goddess is perhaps similarly tedious. However, eventually the journey is over and the statue of the goddess stripped of its raiment. Pygmalion is alone with the image.

Morris emphasises the link (almost a physical bond) between the two, creator and creation. The contrast between the burning heat outside and the cool dimness within the temple seems to mirror that of Pygmalion's ardour and the statue's marble coldness. A contrast is also drawn between the noises of the singing and the quietness of the sanctuary, where only silent priests walk by occasionally or a solitary

woman mutters her prayer (cf. the contrast between the noise of the battle with the sea-monster and the silence after in the Perseus story). It is interesting that Morris makes the lone suppliant female ("some lone damsel"), as though it were usually only women who turned to the goddess for help in love. After this description of the serenity of the temple (perhaps more like a Christian church scene than a temple of love), Morris then describes how Pygmalion kneels before the image made by himself, an image which he thought at the time to be "most fair". His new statue is, of course, now the embodiment of ideal femininity to him.

When Pygmalion first saw the procession, Venus was described as the Mother of Desire. Now she is in her temple, she has become the Shame-faced Mother, perhaps a reference to her unclothed state or possibly to her position ("Venus Pudica"). Morris was familiar with Botticelli's "Venus" and may well have visualised the statue in that pose (if the title is a reference to the statue's position, then it might be another interesting similarity to Ovid). The myrtle-trees are whispering outside and at the altar a thin flame flickers, just as in Ovid's version. Pygmalion, bewildered and depressed, stands before the altar and as he casts incense into the flame (an act which must surely reinforce the identification of his beloved statue with the one now before him), he stammers out his prayer.

The whole scene obviously owes much to Ovid. Morris has picked up Ovid's remark that Venus understood what Pygmalion meant by his prayer, even though he did not dare actually to articulate his desire. Instead of using the third person, Morris puts the words into Pygmalion's own mouth:

"O thou forgotten help, dost thou yet know
What thing it is I need, when even I,
Bent down before thee in this shame and woe,
Can frame no set of words to tell thee why
I needs must pray ... "

Morris's Pygmalion is altogether more agonised than Ovid's, aware of the moral implications of his passion. That is not to say that in

Ovid's version the sculptor is unaware or unconcerned (his reluctance to ask for what he really wants disproves such an assertion) but that Morris has greatly expanded a subtle suggestion in the Latin. The statue is Pygmalion's "shame". He finds it painful even to speak of his condition, the words leaving his mouth like sobs. However, the goddess shows her benevolence in the same way as in Ovid; the flame at her altar flares up and then subsides.

At this sign Pygmalion is once again inspired with hope (his fluctuations of mood have become more rapid and extreme as his passion increases its hold on him) and he starts forward. Morris will only refer to his "nameless hope"; we are not told what that hope actually is. He may well be trying to reflect the mental attitude of the sculptor for Pygmalion also refuses to admit to himself the specific form of this hope. Such a self-delusion would not necessarily be only the result of shame. Morris has already shown how Pygmalion fears he is mad. It is possible that he refuses to give real shape to his desire because he is terrified of confronting his own madness.

As Pygmalion steps forward, a thick black cloud envelops the goddess's image and altar, a cloud apparently visible only to the sculptor. Pygmalion no longer trusts any of his senses and undoubtedly assumes he is suffering hallucinations. Once more bereft of hope, he makes his way home. Only when Morris describes the setting of the sun do we realise that Pygmalion has spent the entire afternoon at the altar, time which has passed far more quickly than did the weary morning. He goes home, putting on a brave face for those around him but isolated from them.

Morris describes the scenes through which he passes, emphasising the gaiety, laughter and love which contrast so strongly with Pygmalion's dreariness¹⁷. There may be a mild criticism of the sculptor's perversity here; the girls are "fit to move the moody man's desire". There is also a strong contrast between the happiness of the fulfilled young love around him and his own frustrated passion, the former constantly reminding Pygmalion (and Morris's readers) of the joys

to which he cannot aspire. His separation from the ordinary world is total. His mind is a turmoil of conflicting desires; he longs to see his beloved, yet is loth to face the final dashing of his hopes. He begins to fantasise about "some strange region" where he might go and thus avoid ever reaching home. Suddenly he is at his own door. Jolted out of his reverie, all at once his mad passion is gone. He no longer desires the statue, his "old folly".

Morris's portrayal of the loss of this love is particularly vivid and subtle. Pygmalion weeps for the happiness which his madness brought him and which will continue to touch his life forever:

"Like a part song too sweet, too short, and yet
Enmeshed for ever in the memory's net."

Crying, he thanks Venus for his "deliverance" but this is hardly what Morris's readers are expecting and it does not appear sufficient for Pygmalion either. His speech of thanks is open to several different interpretations. Superficially it seems to be a prayer of gratitude but there is also an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, perhaps even disappointment, which is readily understood:

"Weeping he entered, murmuring, 'O fair Queen,
I thank thee that my prayer was not for nought,
Truly a present helper hast thou been
To those who faithfully thy throne have sought!
Yet, since with pain deliverance I have bought,
Hast thou not yet some gift in store for me,
That I thine happy slave henceforth may be?"

There is an element of blackmail in his request for "some gift"; he seems to be trading his future devotion for it. The phrase "happy slave" is also significant. It could refer to a promise of future thralldom but we have already seen that Pygmalion has been Venus' slave for some time (the more so if his beloved statue is an image of the goddess). Therefore, the emphasis seems to fall on the word "happy". Clearly the only way Venus could make him happy would be to give him a mistress. His unnatural passion for the statue may have gone but this prayer seems to echo the request made by Ovid's

Pygmalion at the altar: "give me a girl like my ivory maiden". He is asking that the impossible object (the statue) be replaced by the acceptable (a living girl).

It has been suggested that the whole of The Earthly Paradise is an attempt to show the inadequacy of art as a substitute for life (see Gent 29), a theme certainly evident in "Pygmalion and the Image". Morris takes great care to describe the madness of Pygmalion's obsession and the way in which it cuts him off from the rest of human life. Art, no matter how perfect, cannot replace real life; the statue cannot replace a living girl as an object of love. To convey this, Morris has to use the elaborate technique of relieving Pygmalion of his unnatural obsession so that it can be replaced by normal human love when he sees the maiden come to life. Ovid is quite content for the passion simply to be transferred but for Morris there can be no question of the two objects or the feeling they inspire being interchangeable. It is essential to the moral of the tale that the possibility of art as an adequate replacement for reality should be totally refuted.

Morris realised, however, that the transition from unnatural to natural love could not be instantaneous and absolute. The old passion is bound to linger in Pygmalion's mind until it is supplanted by the new, healthy one. Thus, although the sculptor is apparently cured, he still hungers for someone to love (the "gift" he asks for) and still nurses, in his heart of hearts, the faintest of hopes about his statue. When he enters his bedroom, he keeps his eyes cast down, supposedly out of shame but perhaps also, we suspect, because he does not want to look and see the truth (Morris later refers to him "gaining courage" to look). The audience realises that something miraculous has happened because there is evidence of a divine presence:

"Yet soft his thoughts were, and the very place

Seemed perfumed with some nameless heavenly air "

It is no surprise, therefore, that when he does raise his face to look, the statue is gone. Now the final change in Pygmalion's emotions takes place:

" ... through his heart again

There shot a pang of his old yearning pain."

(Note that his feelings for the statue are portrayed in a very negative way). This is replaced, however:

"With yearning a strange thrill of hope there came,

A shaft of new desire now pierced him through "

The statue-maiden calls his name and he turns to her. Morris does not describe her as a living statue. Rather she is the "lively image" of the statue. It seems almost as if the statue and girl are not one and the same, the girl only the likeness of the statue. Not only is it paradoxical to describe an image as living, it is also a reversal of the usual sequence in which art imitates nature (cf. Ovid's treatment of this notion). This description also emphasises the separation of the two, statue and girl, and thus the difference in Pygmalion's feelings for them.

The girl is dressed in the robe worn by Venus' statue in the morning procession, an immediate indication of the source of the miracle. Her voice and behaviour of course match her looks, simple and sweet, and she calls Pygmalion her "dear companion", as though she knows him. She is to be both mistress and wife to him ("For I am called thy lover and thy wife."); Morris does not seem to have considered the two necessarily the same. She now recites the speech taught to her by Venus, although she does not yet understand its meaning.

The speech stresses the girl's new-born state and makes it clear that she is Pygmalion's reward for his prayers. Its theme is feeling and touching, physical intimacy; passion is evident in such phrases as "heaving breast". The emphasis on the physical aspects of love is perhaps natural, given that Venus (Goddess of Desire) taught the words to the girl and remembering the physical nature of Pygmalion's earlier passion. These rather sophisticated phrases are contrasted with the maiden's admission that she does not understand them and her simple attempt to express her feelings herself:

"But this I know, I would we were more nigh ."

Her innocent desire to be nearer him conveys far more than the poetic

speech of Venus.

The statue-maiden's behaviour is perhaps slightly disturbing. The fantasy of a male mind as a statue, she seems just the same when she comes to life. She devotes herself entirely and unconditionally to Pygmalion from the moment of her "birth" and is quite happy to be "given" to him as a present. The obvious question, "What if she did not want him?", does not arise¹⁸. She is sweet, gentle, compliant and devoted, accepting Pygmalion as her superior (even addressing him later as "O mighty one!")¹⁹

As the girl speaks, she holds out her arms to her lover and they embrace. Pygmalion's ecstasy is vividly described;

"Passing all words, yea, well-nigh passing thought "
Their actions are the exact parallel to those urged in the speech and individual phrases are repeated to emphasise the link: "sweet breath", "heaving breast" and "living love". Pygmalion weeps with emotion and the maiden, with great insight for one new-born, wonders whether it is because he thinks he must be dreaming (a natural reaction in the circumstances). She urges him to walk in the garden with her, saying that she wants to hear love-speeches like those he made to her when he thought he was

"'A madman, kneeling to a thing of stone!'"

This implies that she was conscious before her vivification but her later surprise at the deepness of his voice shows that she could not have been aware of him before her "birth". Perhaps the implication is rather that he was not "alone" as he thought but was being observed by Venus at the time.

Once in the garden, Pygmalion tells his beloved the story of his love and she weeps to hear it. He remarks:

"'Seest thou how tears still follow earthly bliss?'"

The quest of the Wanderers is, of course, to find "earthly bliss" but Morris obviously believed that pain and sorrow (like death) are unavoidable. Although Pygmalion's story is seemingly one of ultimate joy and fulfilment, he cannot be certain of life-long bliss. The tale's

setting, the month of August, is not only the month of fulfilment but also the end of the summer. Morris, through Pygmalion, explains that love is a mixture of pain and pleasure and that one cannot be separated from the other for each gives the other its value. The same is true of life itself; what "all wise men fear,/But yet escape not," is not only love but also death.

The girl now tells the story of her birth, after first reminding Pygmalion that her vocabulary is as yet undeveloped. Morris's great love of detail leads him to include a description of how a "heavy thing" fell from the girl's hand as she awoke. This is, of course, a reference to the rose Pygmalion had carved in her hand. At first, like a new-born baby, she could not focus her eyes but gradually she saw the goddess standing before her. Venus is here likened to the moon, both fair and terrible. It may at first seem ironical to compare Venus, the goddess of desire, with the moon which is the symbol of Diana, the goddess usually identified with chastity, but the emphasis is undoubtedly on the moon as an object of superstitious dread. Venus brought the statue to life by touching her breast and, as the maiden was naked, she gave her the saffron robe she herself is wearing.²⁰

We are reminded of Pygmalion's physical intimacy with the statue when the girl describes her naked state to him:

"But naked as thou knowest utterly,

E'en as my limbs beneath thine hand had grown,"

The word "utterly" can be taken both with "naked" and "knowest", not only explaining her total nakedness but also implying the depth of knowledge Pygmalion had of her naked form. The physical link

between them is also strengthened by her reference to him as her creator.

Once she is conscious, Venus speaks to her, explaining how she is to be given to Pygmalion to satisfy his yearning heart. The goddess refers to the sculptor as her "servant" but does not explain precisely how he served her. She tells the girl exactly what to do and gives her the robe for a wedding dress. The drapes are described by the goddess as "these things that pass away", perhaps an indirect reference to the eternal beauty they have been covering or perhaps referring to the way they are changed every year. The phrase is, of course, also applicable to the statue-maiden. She is now mortal and must "pass away" eventually, a fact she emphasises herself when she later refers to her "mortal lips".

Before her departure, Venus urges the maiden to love Pygmalion no less than Psyche loved Cupid in former times. This is a strange parallel for the goddess to draw because she was the avowed enemy of Psyche for a very long time and caused her much distress. Morris tells the story in the May episode of The Earthly Paradise. Venus hated Psyche and wanted to destroy her because her great beauty made the people forget the goddess and worship her instead. The question is, why does Venus not become similarly jealous when Pygmalion creates a statue of ideal beauty and worships it? He even forgets, albeit temporarily, the goddess's festal day. The only answer is that the statue is a representation of the goddess. This also helps to explain how Morris seems to separate the image from the girl. The girl could not literally be the statue brought to life, because it was an image of the goddess, but Venus could bring the statue to life,

thereby conferring on it a different identity.

The last words of the statue-maiden repeat the message of the poem, that there cannot be pleasure without pain. She explains to Pygmalion that now she loves him, she has become afraid of the future and fears for the end of their love. It is inevitable that we should fear the loss of what we hold dear but Morris's clear message is that the pleasure is more than worth the pain and that the only possible path is one of total commitment to life. The tale ends idyllically, with the two lovers whispering "soft sweet murmuring words" by the light of the moon.

NOTES

1. Cf. Roderick Marshall, William Morris and his Earthly Paradise (Tisbury 1979), particularly in Chapter 6 "'The Second Earthly Paradise' 1869-1870"
2. There is an incident described in "The Prologue" which is interesting in relation to "Pygmalion and the Image". The Wanderers in their quest for immortality on earth come to a land covered in a thick forest. They decide to enter it in order to discover what kind of men inhabit the place. They face many terrifying, arduous ordeals but are not downcast because all the events and locations seem to correspond exactly to those in their leader's dream, the dream which is to take them to their earthly paradise. Then they discover a terrible shrine with a god of pure gold at its centre and the dry brown bodies of men hanging on the walls. Horrified, they press on and come to the levelled summit of the mountain where they see "a group of well-wrought images". When they draw closer, they are appalled to discover that these images are actually the cleverly-posed embalmed bodies of people long-dead. There are young girls, soldiers and one figure which seems to have been a mighty lord, all dressed like the bodies on the walls of the shrine below. The Wanderers are confronted with the only possible form of "immortality" on earth, the artificial preservation of the body after the spirit has departed. These human statues are in a sense the antithesis of Pygmalion's image. They were human and have become mere images which mimic life, having lost it; she was a statue and has become human, therefore destined to lose her life eventually.
3. In News from Nowhere (first published in The Commonwealth, January to October 1890) his "utopian romance", Morris makes clear his view that life should be accepted and enjoyed. Referring to his own age, he remarks scornfully: "Indeed, in those days it was thought poetic and imaginative to look upon life as a thing to be borne, rather than enjoyed" (News From Nowhere {London 1970} 179).
4. Many of these speeches are contained in Volume 22 of the Collected Works ("Hopes and Fears for Art. Lectures on Art and Industry").
5. "The Beauty of Life. Delivered before the Birmingham Society of Arts and School of Design, February 19, 1880" (Collected Works Volume 22, 63).
6. "Art and Its Producers. An Address delivered in Liverpool before the National Association for the Advancement of Art, 1888" (Collected Works Volume 22, 351). cf. Frederick Engels The Condition of the Working-Class in England (Marx Engels Collected Works {London 1975} Volume 4, 297ff.) esp. 415. Marx and Engels did not, of course, share Morris's enthusiasm for the guild system.

7. "The Beauty of Life" 55
 "And as, on the one hand, I believe that art made by the people as a joy both to the maker and the user would further progress in other matters rather than hinder it, so also I firmly believe that that higher art produced only by great brains and miraculously gifted hands cannot exist without it."
8. "The Arts and Crafts of Today. An Address delivered in Edinburgh before the National Association for the Advancement of Art in October, 1889" (Collected Works Volume 22, 359)
9. This phrase, together with the later references to "the first artificer" and Pygmalion's "god-like mastery", shows that Morris identified the process of creating the statue with the creation of human beings; cf. Ovid's insistence on the realism of Pygmalion's statue ('*virginis est verae facies, ...*').
10. For example, Morris is often accused of idealising the Middle Ages because he openly expressed his admiration for the way of life at that time. However, this charge takes no account of The Defence of Guenevere. This collection of poems recreates all too vividly the brutality and squalor which was also part of that life.
11. Both Ovid and Morris use the same image to describe this passion. Morris refers to a desire which flames, a "burning pain" and "ever-burning, unconsuming fire". Ovid uses the phrase "haurit ... ignes".
12. There certainly seems to have been a "Pygmalion impulse" prevalent among the later Pre-Raphaelites as they discarded many of the original precepts about truthfulness to Nature. Burne-Jones' inability to paint women in any way other than as extremely beautiful creatures is one example but the most startling must be Rossetti's interpretation of Jane Morris. Photographs show her to be a most unusual-looking woman with a prominent nose and thick black eyebrows which almost meet over her nose. She is hardly conventionally beautiful and it is even reported that she was actually mocked for her appearance when she travelled abroad (see Frances Spalding Magnificent Dreams. Burne-Jones and the Late Victorians {Oxford, 1978} 52). Yet, in Rossetti's paintings of her, she is transformed. Her eyebrows are significantly diminished, the mouth is made far more bow-shaped and the squareness of her jaw-line is softened. Her eyes are also spaced further apart. The effect is to turn a strong and striking woman into an ideal of sensual female voluptuousness.
13. The reference to "rippled hair" calls to mind the appearance of Morris's own wife, Jane, whose hair was strikingly wavy. It is not surprising that his description of this perfectly beautiful statue should contain such references.

14. Love is Enough (or The Freeing of Pharamond, a morality) was published by Morris in 1872 in London. It tells the story of a king who gives up his kingdom for love.
15. It is possible that Morris emphasises the religious, reverent nature of Pygmalion's behaviour towards the statue to counteract any possible immoral interpretation. The Ovidian story certainly contains strong hints that Pygmalion's conduct was unrestrained and Morris may well have known that the original tale was even more direct. However, Morris goes beyond what is necessary simply to remove these less savoury aspects. He undoubtedly intended his audience to realise that, to Pygmalion, the statue was a goddess and that his behaviour exceeds what would be expected of even the most devoted lover of a real woman.
16. Burne-Jones used the same sort of subject for his picture "The Car of Love" which was never completed.
17. Cf. Goethe's Faust, Part 1, Sc. 2. There are, in fact, several parallels between the two stories. Both Pygmalion and Faust are figures isolated from society. Both aspire to being joined with the most beautiful woman ever and resort to divine (or diabolic) intervention to achieve this.
18. This theme is explored by Sir Ronald Ross in Edgar or the New Pygmalion.
19. The question of Morris's attitude towards women is an interesting one. Much has been made of the fact that he appointed his daughter May to run the embroidery department of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., for example. However, few women were employed outside this "feminine" branch of the crafts firm and May does not seem to have received an independent income for her work. It could be argued, therefore, that Morris actually reinforced the sexual stereotype rather than helped to break it down. For a full treatment of the role of women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, see Anthea Callen Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914 (London 1979).
20. The fact that the goddess wears the robe of her statue reminds one of the temple scene. However, the image was carefully disrobed after the ceremony so we know that this is not another case of a living statue. It is interesting, though, that the thick black smoke hid the statue from Pygmalion's view for a time. Perhaps this is Morris's device for describing the departure of the divine presence for the sculptor's bedchamber.

Other Versions of Pygmalion

The legend of Pygmalion occurs frequently in much Victorian literature. The story seems to have held a particular interest for artists of the time, although treatments of it vary greatly. Two elements, however, emerge as worthy of particular examination in relation to the Pygmalion legend: the Victorian view of the artist (especially the poet) and the Victorian attitude towards women.

The Victorians had inherited the Romantic traditions, particularly the Romantic view of the artist¹, of love and of death, and the Romantic movement was to remain a significant influence throughout the nineteenth century. However, the Victorians seem to have misunderstood the Romantic notions of reason and imagination; they believed that poets such as Shelley and Coleridge saw reason and imagination as two quite unconnected antithetical faculties. This view led to a division between imaginative experience and "ordinary life" and the Victorian middle classes tended to place aesthetic experience in a compartment separate from their everyday life².

Other influences to be considered are those of the Utilitarians and the Evangelicals. Although their importance diminished during the second half of the nineteenth century, the effect of their views continued to be felt in Victorian life. The Utilitarians considered poetry to be "misrepresentation", likely to corrupt the rational mind and incompatible with true "scientific" thinking³. The Evangelicals also rejected art because it distracted men from the proper business of living a life that would guarantee entry to Heaven. Of course, the influence of these two groups did not lead to the end of artistic production but social restrictions were created within which the artist had to work. R.D. Altlick (Victorian People and Ideas {London 1973} 272) declares: "The age's criteria of acceptable art are usually summed up in the term 'moral aesthetic'". By the end of the nineteenth century, this 'moral aesthetic' had evolved, or been perverted, into the Aesthetic theory of art as exemplified in the works of Wilde and Beardsley, a theory which was considered immoral.

Victorian art was, therefore, supposed to have some social relevance, the theme being more important than the means. In practice, however, although the critics denounced the self-expression of Romanticism, subjective art continued to be produced and enjoyed. The requirement for "meaning" led instead to the cult of realism in art, a notion most closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites and their mentor, Ruskin. Art was expected to derive its subject matter from real life and to convey it by means of minute observations so that the intended meaning could readily be appreciated by ordinary people without explanation.

For their subjects Victorian artists tended to look to the past but were more concerned with its present-day relevance than the Romantics had been. If not historical, then the subject-matter might well be literary, often taken from poets such as Shakespeare or Keats. The meaning of the work would then be instantly clear to the audience. Altlick makes the interesting observation that "subtlety and indirection were not highly valued in Victorian art" (278). He adds: "Although modern criticism has detected a wealth of subtleties in the work of some major Victorian novelists and poets, notably Dickens, George Eliot, Emily Brontë, Hardy, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, there is little evidence that contemporary critics or ordinary readers noticed them."

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1848 in an attempt to restore naturalness and simplicity to painting (lost, so they said, after Raphael). They wished to prove the superiority of realism over "stereotyped, meaningless and insincere art" (John Dixon Hunt The Pre-Raphaelite Imagination 1848-1900 {London 1968} 1) and were in revolt against the academic school of painters led by Reynolds. Their reaction is, in fact, similar to that of the Romantics against the artificiality of eighteenth-century poetry. The Pre-Raphaelite movement contained a contradiction, however, for although the artists were pledged to realism in subject-matter and technique, their paintings were often loaded with messages and symbols⁴. The movement gradually changed so that nowadays such painters as Burne-Jones, whose subject was "another world" are readily termed "Pre-Raphaelite".

Eventually the Aesthetic school evolved in the late seventies and early eighties, claiming Rossetti as its mentor. He protested but the Aesthetes insisted on interpreting his view of art as the pursuit of beauty for its own sake without any social significance. They were also attracted by his introspection, so different to the more common Victorian objectivity. The Aesthetes also borrowed from Pater's "New Cyrenaicism", seizing on his contention that "not the fruit of experience, but the experience itself, is the end" (The Renaissance Conclusion 27). The result was a philosophy of life itself as an art and individual human experience the only reality worth seeking. The social implications of art, advocated so strongly by Ruskin and Morris, were utterly rejected and artists began to see themselves as a class separate from and superior to ordinary men. This was the doctrine of "art for art's sake", taken to its extreme⁵.

The image of the artist during the nineteenth century had come full circle. The tendency to become completely divorced from society had been exhibited by the later Romantics but the moral strictures of the new generation had stopped it going any further⁶. In the Aesthetic movement, however, to paraphrase Williams, the Romantic trap had been sprung. Many of the so-called Decadents, who developed from the Aesthetes at the end of the century, became so sated with the fulfilment of their strangest desires that their only escape from the "ennui" which resulted was death. They, in fact, formed the second generation of Chattertons.

Graham Hough in The Last Romantics (London 1949) XIX describes the history of the artist during the Victorian period thus: "We are faced with the history of an immense number of explorations, many false starts and blind alleys, and not a few personal tragedies, all directed to finding some sort of accommodation between art and a bourgeois industrial society". Add to this the inherited Romantic view of the artist as hero, prophet or even priest and clearly a conflict is likely to arise within the artist. Society required him to devote himself to its interest, to provide moral guidance and reassurance. However, his own artistic preferences and his own talent

might point in quite another direction.

It is easy to understand the attraction of a story in which an artist (Pygmalion) practises his anti-social art to perfection and produces a statue, which is then admitted into society when it becomes human. In the legend Pygmalion is separate from and superior to the rest of society in one sense yet able, through his art, to become part of it. He takes a wife and enters Victorian society's most revered institution, the happy marriage. Moreover, his piety acts as a moral lesson to those around him. He shuns sin (The Propoetides) and searches after purity, truth and beauty, finally being rewarded with the perfect woman. The personal integrity of the artist and the moral guidance necessary for society are both expressed, thus resolving the conflict. The story of Pygmalion could even be seen as the perfect example of the Victorian "moral aesthetic".

Equally important to the artist in the Victorian interpretation of "Pygmalion" is the figure of the ideal woman. Social attitudes towards women underwent a radical change in the course of the nineteenth century and the common view of Victorian men as conformist oppressors of women is perhaps crude. In fact there were at least three views of women current during the period. The first was that of submissive wife, owing all her duty to her husband; she was inferior to him and subject to his control. The second was that of the "new woman" who was independent, free-thinking and ready to challenge men in their own domain: this type of woman was generally confined to the intellectual middle and upper classes (Mary Wollstonecraft is the obvious example). The third view of women, widely held among the educated bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, was of a sex different from but not necessarily inferior to men.

The last view is the most important in our discussion. "Womanhood" was seen as a distinctive characteristic (virtue, even) epitomising the tender, compassionate and, significantly, the moral side of human nature. A woman had to remedy a defect in man, to complement his natural characteristics. John Ruskin in his essay

"Of Queens' Gardens" (contained in Sesame and Lilies) discusses at length the role of women in society and clearly defines the difference between the sexes, as he saw them (section 68):

"The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention, his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever was is just, wherever conquest is necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest."

He continues (section 69):

"She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise - wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable modesty of service - the true changefulness of woman."

This perfect creature's role was to create a haven of peace, a temple to which the battle-scarred man could retreat from the terrible world of business, there to regain tranquillity and moral sense (that is, a home). Woman-worship provided the new moral inspiration which Victorian society felt it needed, and female emancipation was opposed even by "liberals" (often female) who were worried that a vital moral influence would be lost if women were allowed to coarsen their fine feminine nature by competing with men.

The worship of women as "enduringly, incorruptibly good" raises an inevitable problem - sex. The Victorians are renowned for being exceptionally prudish about sexual matters and there is no doubt that the bourgeoisie in particular treated sex as a shameful

secret, despite the size of the average Victorian family. For the respectable woman pre-marital chastity was, of course, obligatory and it was even honoured as an ideal for men in a way it had not been in the past⁷. Young boys were encouraged to view women with the utmost respect and awe, in an attempt to keep them pure in mind and body. Any woman was an "angel"⁸ and the best of all was, of course, Mother.

In such a society adultery was the blackest of sins, again particularly for women. Once a woman had "fallen", she became a social outcast. The violence of the Victorian reaction against sexual indiscretions is so extreme that, as W.E. Houghton points out in The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (Oxford 1957), it is worth considering the possible reasons (359):

"As we look more closely at Victorian life, we can see good cause, theoretical and actual, for a frightened reaction, and one which not only intensified the demand for chastity, the severe punishment for extramarital relationships, and the program of censorship, but also promoted a new attitude toward love".

The three sources of this "good cause" he sees as the "literature of prostitution" (the French literature of Balzac, Sand and later Baudelaire, Gautier and Zola), the philosophy of "free love" already widespread in America and also widely publicised in the novels of Sand, and, finally, the apparent great increase in sexual licence in England. This included not only prostitution⁹ but also adultery and seduction (described by Dr. W. Acton as "a sport and a habit" in his pamphlet Prostitution, Considered in its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects 1857). The Victorians were terrified by the "unbridled sensuality" they feared could be released, to the destruction of the national character and eventually of the nation itself¹⁰. The inevitable reaction was a strengthening of the code of purity and virtue and, to combat the baser, sexual nature of man, an exaltation of spiritual love.

The notion of love as the supreme experience of life was

inherited from Romanticism. It was put into a domestic context by the Victorians; the object was to form a perfectly happy marriage in which both partners were faithful. To this end, men were encouraged to keep themselves pure for the perfect woman they would one day meet and wed. This "goddess" deserved the highest levels of reverence and devotion and it was only by attaining such a purity of emotion that a man could struggle against mere lust. Coventry Patmore declared;

"You love? That's high as you shall go,
For 'tis as true as Gospel text

Not noble then is never so,
Either in this world or the next."

(The Angel in the House Canto III, Prelude III)

In fact love was seen almost as a religious experience, through which one became a better, more virtuous person.

It is certainly true that many Victorians were troubled by doubts about Christian beliefs. In an age of so much change and turmoil it was natural for men to search for values to which they could adhere. Leslie Stephen wrote to Julia Duckworth begging her to marry him; he declared, "I have not got any saints and you ought not to be angry if I put you in the place where my saints ought to be".¹¹ Unable to worship a divine object, men turned to human ones instead. Romantic love was the means by which the Victorian (particularly perhaps the Victorian intellectual¹²) could reassure himself that there were some constant moral values in the turbulent modern world, a glimpse of the divine amid the materialism of the age.

Pygmalion's statue was a potent image for Victorian artists; she was totally innocent and pure, perfectly beautiful, yet able to be taken and enjoyed as a wife. The erotic element of the story (her nakedness, for example) is sublimated by its pseudo-religious qualities and thus made acceptable¹³. In short, Pygmalion's perfect woman was also the Victorian ideal.

Several themes seem to emerge during an examination of the ^gPygmalion myth in Victorian literature. Most prominent, perhaps, is

the Romantic treatment, with its emphasis on the supremacy of art, the fulfilment of life through love, and the strange attraction of death (this is the legacy of the poetry of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and Byron). Often associated with this is the religious (or pseudo-religious) interpretation of the story, sometimes in the form of Christian allegory and sometimes an exploration of the notion of "the religion of love", love as a divine experience.

A smaller but not necessarily less significant category is that of comic treatment. This trend seems to appear later in the century; it is particularly interesting as the comedy is used as a vehicle for serious social comment. These versions could be said to follow the pattern of the "moral aesthetic" more closely than their earlier counterparts, presenting to their audiences important lessons to be learned about society. The Romantic and religious interpretations tend to be far more subjective, sometimes even self-indulgent, and while they are interesting as products of their time, they lack the vitality of the Ovidian original or of the comic versions.

Romantic Interpretations

Under this heading I propose to discuss the versions by Sir Frank Marzials, W.C. Bennett, Arthur Hallam, W.H. Mallock, Frederick Tennyson and G.E. Lancaster. However, as there is a strong link between the Romantic and the religious interpretations, several works might fit just as readily into the second category.

Sir Frank Marzials

Pygmalion (suggested by Mr. Burne-Jones' Picture)¹⁴

Life, life and love - Sculptor, thy prayer is heard
See, of her gentle ruth and bountihead,
The Lady of Love herself hath deigned to shed
The light of life on that white form, and stirred
Soul and sweet sense within, till at thy word,
Thy look, thy touch, the love-flush mantles red,
Glorying.

But hark! what voice was that that said,
"Life, life and love! - ay, but with death for third; -
O fool, to change thy chisel's work, divine
And changeless, for a glamour-gift of breath
Pent in a bubble, a bubble of milk and wine,
And honey'd poison; - O fool, thus choosing death
When the eternity of art was thine!"

"Life, life and love - O fool!" the echo saith.

This poem is interesting if only because Marzials was prompted to write it by viewing Burne-Jones' picture (presumably the last in the sequence, "The Soul Attains"). In a sense it is only an interpretation of an interpretation but Marzials obviously knew the story already and the painting simply gave him a chance to express his own feelings about it. He is most concerned about the loss of the statue's immortality. The Victorian preoccupation with death led to a great interest in immortality through art, and this general concern is reflected in the attitudes of Burne-Jones and Morris. The notion of relinquishing such immortality could, therefore, seem surprising to them.

First, however, he writes about the fulfilment of love, its glory, and Pygmalion's good fortune in having his prayer answered. The reader might at first assume the poem is a paean to love; not so. The second stanza produces a complete change of mood. Instead of exultation there is clear contempt in the poet's voice: 

"O fool, to change thy chisel's work, divine
And changeless, for a glamour-gift of breath
Pent in a bubble"

Life is seen as an illusion, a trick. To the owner of the second voice Pygmalion has made a terrible mistake, exchanging the brevity of present pleasure for "the eternity of art". The ecstatic romanticism of the first stanza, with its references to the stirring of "Soul and sweet sense within" and the glory of "Life, life and love", is replaced by a harsher tone, still in the Romantic tradition but tinged with bitterness and without the joy of life.

Lines Spoken in the Character of Pygmalion¹⁵

'Tis done, the work is finished - that last touch
Was as a God's! Lo! now it stands before me,
Even as long years ago I dreamed of it,
Consummate offspring of consummate art;
Ideal form itself! Ye Gods, I thank you,
That I have lived to this - for this thrown off
The pleasure of my kind; for this have toiled
Days, nights, months, years; - am not I recompensed?
Who says an artist's life is not a king's?
I am a king, alone among the crowd
Of busy hearts and looks - apart with nature
I sit, a God upon the earth, creating
More lovely forms than flesh and blood can equal.
Jove's workmanship is perishable clay,
But mine immortal marble; when the proudest
Of our fair city dames is laid i'the dust
This creature of my soul will still be lovely.
Let me contemplate thee again. That lip -
How near it wears the crimson! and that eye -
How strives it with the marble's vacancy!
Methinks if thou wert human, I could love thee;
But that thou art not, nor wilt ever be -
Ne'er know and feel how beautiful thou art.
O God, I am alone then - she hears not -
And yet how like to life! Ha - blessed thought,
Gods have heard prayers ere now? Hear me, bright Venus,
Queen of my dreams, hear from thy throne of light,
Forgive the pride that made my human heart
Forget its nature. Let her live and love!
I dare not look again - my brain swims round -
I dream - I dream - even now methought she moved -
If 'tis a dream, how will I curse the dawn
That wakes me from it! There - that bend again -
It is no dream - Oh, speak to me and bless me.

This poem also represents the result of a specific experience, in this case "on the Occasion of a Represented Charade". There is nothing unusual about Hallam's interpretation of the myth but the poem is interesting because during the charade Hallam had acted the part of Pygmalion and a young woman named Charlotte Sotherby had been the statue. It is clear from the letter that he wrote to Emily Tennyson¹⁶ on the subject that the moment when the "statue" moved was an emotional one. Hallam seems to have managed to relive that moment as Pygmalion.

Hallam's Pygmalion has worked and dreamed for many years to produce his perfect piece of art. He has foresworn the ordinary pleasures of the world but he feels the sacrifice has been worthwhile; "Who says an artist's life is not a king's?" At this point a sense of unease creeps over the reader. Pygmalion seems too confident, too impressed by his own abilities. In fact, he seems to see himself as a kind of god:

"I sit, a God upon the earth, creating

More lovely forms than flesh and blood can equal."

This is an aspect of the story which apparently worried several artists (for example, Shaw, Gilbert and Buchanan); the idea that man can play God on earth. This is not surprising when one considers the age in which they were living, a scientific industrial age in which things previously deemed impossible were now being achieved and in which fundamental beliefs were being challenged. Pygmalion's pride must surely be humbled before long.

The sculptor now surveys his work. He realises its inadequacies; although lifelike, it is not alive. After the pride in creation comes the recognition of the limitations of human ability. The artist has to pray to Venus to bring the statue to life:

"Forgive the pride that made my human heart

Forget its nature. Let her live and love!"

The prayer is, of course, answered and as Pygmalion swoons with joy, the statue begins to bend. There is a strong undercurrent of Christian imagery throughout the poem. Pygmalion has lived the life

of an ascetic, pure and monk-like. He momentarily succumbs to the sin of pride (the deadliest of the seven) but repents, calling on Venus on her "throne of life" to help him. She does so, and as the statue moves, Pygmalion begs it to speak and bless him.

This poem clearly illustrates the strong links between Romanticism and religious feeling. The Romantic poets fervently believe in the vital importance of the imagination and all, to a greater or lesser extent, considered the imagination to be concerned with a supernatural order. Blake, at the extreme, was convinced that the imagination was, in fact, God operating in the human soul.¹⁷

W.H. Mallock

Pygmalion to his statue, become his wife¹⁸

Is this then so, and have I striven in vain
To hide the change I suffer? And can you see
Everything is not all it used to be?
Yes, love, that past can come no more again.
Am I in pain, too? Good - you have read my pain,
Known it is very great. That comforts me.
For now knowing this, I know your lips will spare
Reproaches, leave the world to blur my name.
Mark my face well. No flush of silly shame,
But pallor only, and calm of grief is there -
Grief - yes, in that we have one thing still to share,
We two; for you, you will love on the same.

What do I mean? Ah me! how tenderly
Your sweet eyes ask, which once to me could bring
Balm, by a look, for any grievous thing.
What is it? Well, 'tis best that I reply -
Falter forth all myself, or by-and-by
My life will yield thee a crueller truth-telling.

Yet will you understand? Or will your heart
Conceive my phrasèd sorrow, or even tell
Truly to what a depth I am pitiable,
And how to thee hath fallen the better part?
Truly how far the happier thou art,
Whose love is still a living water-well?

What should I tell thee of some man who fain
Would love some woman, and finds love's font run dry?
Ah, 'There's none such', it is on your lips to cry,
'That ever longed to love and longed in vain -
Nay, none so very wretched!' Pause again!
Pause and look near, look near! That man am I.

Yes - as some blind man standing on the shore,
With the whole wet drift of the ocean -storm blown free
On his mute lids, and hearing thunderly
All the hoarse hollow length of breakers roar,
Feels one great longing overwhelm him for one more -
One wild fight more of the old yearned-for sea.

Do I wrong thee lightly? Nay: thou canst divine
Too well the lines of anguish on my brow.
Thou must have anguish too; but happier thou
Wilt still have where to love, for whom to pine;
Whilst I - only to yearn to love is mine,
But my dead love revives not anyhow.

I have said. But you, do you take me, saying thus?
Can you ever know how sorrowful men's loves are?
How we can only hear Love's voice from far -
Only despaired - of eyes be dear to us -
Mute ivory, that can never be amorous -
Far fair gold stigma of some lonliest* star?

*sic

The Love we follow is cruel - a mystery;
 Upon the horizon only doth he dwell.
 And thou, thou art now no more inscrutable,
 Thou has given and opened all thine heart to me.
 I thought to embrace; I stretched mine arms to thee;
 And lo, I stand and stretch them in farewell.

Ah, one dear dream wherein I had hoped to snare
 The love I chase for ever! oh, ultimate
 Rest, as I dreamed thee! Lo, my love, my fate
 Calls us of old far off - I know not where.
 I follow. Adieu, sweet eyes! love once was there
 For me; but love has left them desolate.

Tired pilgrim of a fugative* vague delight,
 Where shall I rest? Alas! I fain would be
 Some far-out star over the windy sea,
 Bathed by the wild spray-sprinkled breath of night,
 With the morn for lullaby, and the saffron light
 Of the far happy morn to cradle me.

The influence of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is evident in this poem. For the young Mallock (he was only twenty when he wrote this poem) Pygmalion is an equally doomed figure. He picks up the notion of the endless search after perfection and continues it after the point at which most versions of the tale end. Pygmalion has achieved his dream: he has rejected human imperfection and created a perfection of his own, which has become human. Mallock realises that this inability to be satisfied with things as they are is a trait in Pygmalion's character which will continue to influence his behaviour. Why should he be any more content with the statue once she is human than he was with the real women she replaced? No, Pygmalion is doomed for ever to search after the perfect love,

"Tired pilgrim of a fugative* delight".

Instead of the story being one of fulfilment, it is a kind of tragedy.

In creating such a character for Pygmalion, Mallock gives it

*sic

some kind of approval. This despairing, suffering figure has obvious attractions as a kind of Romantic hero. However, there are undoubted inadequacies in the character. Pygmalion's sorrow is his own fault. He has been blessed enough to fulfil a dream and the fact that he is still discontented is a failure on his part. Mallock has fallen into the trap of what Bowra¹⁹ terms the third danger of Romanticism: that is, vagueness. The reader has no clear notion of this "perfect love" that Pygmalion seeks and there is a strong suspicion that he is equally uncertain. Pygmalion is interested only in what he does not possess. As soon as he has it in his grasp, he loses interest and abandons it, just as he is abandoning the statue-woman because she is no longer "inscrutable".

Mallock fails to make his reader feel sufficient sympathy for his hero; the suffering is overworked. Moreover, he is unable to overcome the reader's sympathy for the statue. She was called to life, given to the sculptor and, by his own admission, has loved him well. She will continue to do so but will be left quite alone when he deserts her. Pygmalion even claims that she is better off than he is for that very reason: " ... but happier thou

Wilt still have where to love, for whom to pine "

This is perhaps a bold attempt by the poet to turn conventional values upside down but it does not succeed. Instead Pygmalion appears selfish and self-absorbed, too immersed in his own "sorrow" to heed the suffering he is causing.

Mallock shows ingenuity in his use of the legend but fails to convey the vision which inspires Pygmalion's behaviour, without which the character's suffering is reduced to mere self-pity²⁰. The last stanza goes some way towards redressing the balance. The image of the distant star over the wild sea is a vivid one and does at least convey a real sense of yearning and numb despair.

W.C. Bennett

Pygmalion²¹

How the white vision shaped it in my thought,
How shall I tell! how in my nightly dreams
I knew its presence, though I saw it not,
In solitude - in cities - 'mid the hush
Of forests - 'mid the throng and crush of men,
With untold longings, thirsting more and more,
Yea, hungering for its beauty! how with time
I wrestled for that prize, yet won it not!
How even to agony my soul was wrought,
To tears and frenzy, yet I won it not!
I felt its glory flooding through my soul -
'The chaos that should bring this wonder forth
I brooded o'er - how long! how long in vain,
Watching and waiting ere its beauty came!
Faint as a rainbow first it wander'd forth;
Misty and vanishing it met my gaze,
Nor came, nor went, the creature of my will.
Yet seems it not with gradual growth it grew,
But in one golden moment leapt to light.
O thrice-blest hour that bore her! In a breath
The veil was rent, and lo! before my gaze,
My thought's rapt gaze, that worshipped as it saw,
She stood; and was it given to me to fix
Its haunting shape before my actual sense,
Giving mine eyes its beauty? Then I took
Marble, and wrought, and wrought, how long in vain!
Leaving the marble, marble and not life.
O blessed Gods! yet knowing not despair;
O blessed Gods! still grasping flying hope;
And one by one, I wrought her beauties forth,
Clearing white brow, and breast, and lustrous smile,
From gross embraces of the entombing stone,

Till at last, in still perfection, stood
 The white sweet wonder, silent in the sun;
 Silent, and yet how tuneful with sweet speech,
 Utterance divine, that from the listening soul
 Drew echoes, though the dull ear heard it not!
 And ever, as the summer breeze lays hand
 Upon the harp, and shakes its music forth
 In passionate sobs, and swells, and dying falls,
 So through me did that mystic spirit pass,
 Till all my being vibrated with love,
 And all my heart's hopes flutter'd round that stone,
 And my days wail'd unto it, white and cold,
 Silent and wordless, for a mortal love,
 Ever, with passionate moanings, for sweet love,
 Till life grew to one thought - one throbbing hope,
 And the great Gods heard but this prayer in heaven:
 "O let her live, and my blest knees shall grow
 "Unto your altar-steps in thankfulness!
 "But let her live, and all my life shall be
 "One sacrifice - thick incense steaming up
 "Unto your footstools! not with empty breath,
 "O awful Gods! ye know, I pour this prayer!
 "I cry, even as the blinded cry for light,
 "Even as wild mothers, in a slaughter'd town,
 "Shriek o'er their babes for mercy! Spurn me not,
 "Dread powers, within whose lips are fearful joys,
 "Are bliss unutterable - despair, and death!
 "Ye crown'd eternities, whose will is fate,
 "Ye, sitting in your high Olympian halls,
 "Know only bliss for ever - not as we,
 "Shades of an hour, whose days are dark with death,
 "That perish with the lapse of fleeting years.
 "What is our life to your eternity?
 "What were it, though we sat on golden thrones,
 "And lived the lives of heaven? a passing dream.
 "Have mercy, Gods! I sought not for this life,

"This mortal capability of pain:
 "Ye gave this air-drawn being to my frame,
 "This hunger of the soul ye gave to me,
 "Unasking. Gods! from you, I took this thirst
 "Of beauty, which unquenched, what prayers were mine,
 "But for forgetfulness - for peace and rest,
 "Deep ease, sweet rest, within a peaceful urn!
 "What were it, Gods, though ye should bid her live!
 "O let her live! What were it unto you
 "To lift this cup of joy unto my lips?
 "O sweeter draught than ever Hebe bore!
 "That I might drink and be even as a God,
 "Knowing nor care nor sorrow of the earth,
 "But only bliss - bliss for how brief a space,
 "Ere Hades hold me, shade amid pale shades,
 "Yet, in spite of Lethe, wailing still for her,
 "Ever for her - for her - alone for her!
 "Why are ye deaf? my prayer is in your ears
 "In the still night - at rise and set of sun,
 "And through the glaring watches of the day,
 "Crying this cry for ever - let her live!
 "Olympian! throne above all thrones of Gods!
 "Hear me! for thou has known this fire of love,
 "This burning passion to be clasp'd of one:
 "Panting to Danaë in a rain of gold;
 "Protean, in Amphitryon's bearded form,
 "Quaffing deep raptures in Alcmena's arms.
 "Did not Eurotas see thee as a swan
 "Burn unto Leda? Thou whom Semele
 "Saw a consuming splendour, hear thou - hear!
 "In dear remembrance of those fever'd hours
 "Of supermortal passion, make this shape
 "Perfect with motion and all gifts of sense,
 "Feeling, and thought, that I may know her love!
 "O thou, foam-born! thou, whom the heavens have heard
 "Wailing the lost Adonis! unto thee

"I turn, beseeching! Goddess! unto thee
"This beating fever of the burning blood
"Is worship, and pale passion's pains and tears
"Thou view'st exultant; therefore, Goddess, hear!
"And I will worship thee - thee, only thee,
"Grasping thy snowy altars evermore.
"Lo! a deep vow I vow thee; hear my vow!
"Give this white silence breathing to my arms,
"And ever shall a chorus chant thy praise,
"With solemn songs, within thy temple's bounds,
"Heard of the heavens, and earth, and rounding sea;
"And, in the sunshine, Aphrodite, here,
"Shall Cyprus bow before thy robeless self,
"Perfect in marble, by my chisel wrought
"Fair as the blue waves saw thee, from the sea
"Rising, the glory and desire of earth."

So rose my prayer ere the cold morning glared
Athwart the east, and when the last faint flush
Of latest evening died from off the west,
In the hot noon and through the hush of night;
And lo! I cried not unto deafened ears
Regardless. O my joy, sing forth their praise,
And let thy thanks go up, even as my cry
Pulsed from the inmost beatings of the heart!
She lived! she lived! O life above all life
Heaven-sent! I gazed on life; along her cheek
Life flushed; life beat within her bosom's swell,
In quivering eyelid and in softening lip,
In rosy limb and every violet vein.
Gods! what a soul dreamed from her dewy eyes!
What life within the tendrils of her hair
Awed me with joy - with joy, even as I gazed,
To stillness- but with joy - excess of joy!
What could I do but gaze - but gaze and gaze,
With fearful hope, beholding that fair dream?
Breathing to heaven, if it were but a dream,

So might I dream for ever! But that fear
Each moment mingled more its night with light,
Hope-drawn; joy whispered that I lived awake;
Awake! O never slumber had such dream!
The sculptured creature of my hands was gone;
A new Pandora there before me stood.
Gods! what a beauty sat upon her brow!
Not the white glory on great Here's own,
Not laughing Hebe's whiter! O that smile -
The very smile that burns love into Gods
From Aphrodite's face! O glistening smile!
O burst of sunlight on a darken'd world,
That smites its sobs to gladness! Lips as red
As Hyacinthus' blood! Ye heavens! her words -
Honey more sweet than ever Hybla hived,
You heard the Sirens seize Odysseus' ear
with Circe's breathings! Such a rounded arm
Won Zeus to Maia! Tresses - nets of gold,
Fit as lorn Ariadne's streaming hair
To catch Dionusus! One such look -
For one I had laughed to outdare Alcides' self,
And beard swart Hades! Blessed gods! she lived,
And I had hearing but to drink her words;
Mine eyes had vision but to feed on her.
Hope - memory - thought - existence - from my brain
She smote the world - earth - heaven - and all but her,
And joy and grief - life - death - and all but her!

The power of the imagination was the corner-stone of Romantic thinking. Through this power the poets sought to achieve an understanding of spiritual realities, beyond the immediacy of this world, and then to recreate these visions in their work. Bowra(11) summarises the philosophy: "their art aimed at presenting as forcibly as possible the moments of vision which give to even the vastest issues the coherence and simplicity of single events."

Such a vision was merely indicated in Mallock's poem. In Bennett's, it is mentioned frequently and given substance when Pygmalion uses it to create his statue. The whole poem is heavily Romanticised, full of conventional symbols and allusions and even including a reference to that most Romantic of musical instruments, the Aeolian harp.²² (39)

The poem is in the first person, concentrating wholly on Pygmalion's thoughts during the process of creation and vivification. The lengthy and articulate prayer occupies a central position and the poem ends as the living statue smiles at Pygmalion for the first time. It begins as the sculptor describes the "white vision" which took over his mind and was given form by the statue. At first this form was elusive:

"Faint as a rainbow first it wander'd forth;

Misty and vanishing it met my gaze,

Nor came, nor went, the creation of my will."²³

However, with the suddenness of a revelation, one day he saw it clearly and was able to set to work on the marble. He worked and worked, never despairing, until before him stood his vision of perfection. The whole tone of the passage is ecstatic and it abounds with religious vocabulary and imagery; "O thrice-blest hour that bore her!", "The veil was rent," "worshipped as it saw". The statue is described as having been freed from its "entombing stone" but, of course, she is not alive. Pygmalion begins to pray fervently for the miracle. He does not, it should be noted, pray like Ovid's Pygmalion! he asks quite specifically for the marble to be brought to life.

Bennett uses the prayer as a vehicle for comment on human mortality, pain and death. Pygmalion cries out to "the great Gods" that they control the fates of men and are therefore responsible for his situation:

"Have mercy, Gods! I sought not for this life,

This mortal capability of pain;

Ye gave this air-drawn being to my frame,

This hunger of the soul ye gave to me,

Unasking."

His vision is clearly of divine origin. At first he addresses his prayer to Jupiter, as a frequent victim of passion. Then he directs it to Aphrodite, herself the victim of bereaved love (Adonis). He vows to worship only her if she will help him and, interestingly, also pledges to make a naked statue of her for her temple. These promises work and the statue comes to life.

A rapturous description of her beauty follows, emphasising Pygmalion's "excess of joy" at the miracle. The statue is "A new Pandora", a reference which is perhaps surprising/amidst all the ecstasy. It was Pandora who let all the cares into the world. Perhaps Bennett is implying that Pygmalion's state of elevated joy will not last. In any case, Pygmalion loses consciousness of everything but her and the poem ends in a climax of Romantic passion:

"Hope - memory - thought - existence - from my brain
She smote the world - earth - heaven - and all but her,
And joy and grief - life - death - and all but her!"

Bennett's interpretation is typically Romantic: Pygmalion, through the power of his imagination, is able to attain a divine vision, which then acquires concrete form.

G.E. Lancaster

Pygmalion in Cyprus²⁴

(text too long to be quoted in full - 127 verses)

(G.E. Lancaster was the pseudonym of G.E. Mackay)

Like Bennett, Lancaster uses Pygmalion's voice to tell the story, in a soliloquy and in a lengthy address to the statue. The verse structure is unusual: for much of the poem a three-line stanza is used, changing to five lines when Pygmalion apparently sings his love to the marble girl.

The work begins with Pygmalion upbraiding the completed statue

or not returning his love. A connection between the statue and Venus is made in the very first stanza when the image is described as "Venus-tall". There is, throughout the poem, an undercurrent of sexuality quite different from the "throbbing passion" of the more overtly Romantic works. The statue's nakedness is emphasised {"(Nude as a pearl)"}, as is her virgin coldness. Pygmalion has no intention of worshipping her from afar and his whole speech vibrates with physical passion. He will not be denied, he wants "A kiss of fire, a lay to lull the lark". His intention is to "cling" to her "as limpets cling to rocks". In fact his passion has made him even careless of the approbation of Jove ("And I will have thee mine, tho' Jove upbraids."). He describes the birds as "wanton" and says the stars "throb as they would swoon."

Pygmalion's train of thought leads him to fantasise about becoming a statue himself and so joining her. Even in this inanimate state his feelings would seem to be decidedly physical. He imagines the two of them:

"A group of two in one:

A man and nymph, conjoinèd here for aye,

To be the symbol of a marriage day."

He then imagines their love-play and suddenly realises that she might still refuse him. With a complete change of mood he begins to threaten the statue, swearing he will murder her if she denies him:

"... Love has many names, and one is Hate!"

However, threats, like pleading, have no effect on her and he tries another approach. He threatens to bring another girl to his house and in the presence of the statue to make love to her²⁵. At last he seems to succeed. The statue moves and speaks, reproving Pygmalion for such terrible thoughts.

A dialogue between the two ensues. Pygmalion has no doubts that it was Venus who caused the stone maiden to come to life, though his behaviour has hardly been in the tradition of a pious follower of the goddess. It could be argued, however, that his behaviour has been more plausible, more truly that of a man gripped by passion.

Once the statue is alive and responds to his advances, Pygmalion becomes calmer. He sings a love-song with a refrain of "For ever and for ever!" promising that the two of them shall live without fear of death because of their love; this is perhaps ironic when one remembers that the statue has to surrender her immortality in order to become human. The two swear their love to each other but the statue-maiden is obviously disturbed by the concept of death. Pygmalion is convinced that love can overcome death but gradually the situation becomes clear: at dawn the statue will return to her marble form.

This change, when it comes, is strongly reminiscent of Myrrha's transformation in the Metamorphoses²⁶. The stone engulfs her from the feet up and she is able to speak until the moment her mouth is covered. The audience is uncertain as to whether she will return to Pygmalion; she seems to promise to do so as a woman:

"I will return to thee in woman's form
And be a comrade tho' I seem a doom;
As Iris leaps like lightning from the storm,
I will await thee in my spirit's tomb."

The "spirit's tomb" is, presumably, the stone which now imprisons her. Once she is again marble, Pygmalion's love is not diminished. He swears his undying devotion and promises to wait for her:

"And I (till stars do fade),
Fierce for thy love, uncouched, will here abide
To claim thy fealty and to call thee bride ... "

Thus the poem ends as it began; Pygmalion before his beloved statue.

Lancaster, like Mallock, seems to have considered Pygmalion a doomed character. Instead of being fated to search eternally for a vague phantom love as in Mallock's poem, he is here destined to await for ever the return of his stone maiden. Lancaster has supplemented one Romantic motif with another: a supernatural happening. Of course the original story already concerns one such event (the transformation from stone to flesh) but by reversing the process as well, Lancaster has altered the effect.

The other poets who chose to interpret the legend in Romantic terms paid little attention to the actual process of the original miracle, preferring to concentrate on the emotions of the characters and the power of imagination which wrought the change. To this Lancaster has added a ghost-story element, another theme much-used in Romantic poetry (e.g. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", "Christabel", "Lamia"). The reader is uncertain about what has happened. Did the statue come to life or was this Pygmalion's fantasy? Was she a spirit with whom he would be reunited in death? Generally, Lancaster's poem illustrates the effect of what might be termed the darker side of Romanticism, with its erotic and violent undertones and images of the agony of passion and magic²⁷.

Frederick Tennyson

Pygmalion²⁸

(text too long to be quoted in full - 10 sections approximately 340 lines)

Frederick Tennyson (1807-1898) was the elder brother of Alfred. He lived much of his life abroad, including twenty years in Florence, and married an Italian girl, Maria Guilotti. He was for some time under the influence of Swedenborg²⁹ and other religious mystics, only returning to the orthodox Christian faith in his last years. He was an accomplished poet but was always overshadowed by his brother.

If Lancaster's poem is darkly Romantic, then Tennyson's is quite the opposite. He was obviously influenced by Wordsworth and his poem is a clear example of the close relationship between Romantic poetry and religious feeling. Tennyson changes several details of the story. For example, the goddess to whom Pygmalion prays is Urania (Muse of Astrology³⁰), not Aphrodite. He also attempts to rationalise the tale by including an episode in the sculptor's past when he glimpsed a beautiful maiden in the woods one day. The image of her has, apparently remained in his subconscious and is the

inspiration for the statue. By Urania's intervention the statue comes to life and is united with her devoted lover. Tennyson uses the bare bones of the story, upon which he hangs an entire philosophy of love and life imbued with Romantic and mystical notions.

Most obvious is the philosophy of "One Life", the cornerstone of Wordsworth's poetry of Nature. Wordsworth believed that God was in all natural things, that the natural world had a soul with which man had to communicate. In fact man could not help doing so because he was constantly affected by the world of nature around him. There was one Power which flowed through all things:

"A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things ..." ³¹

Tennyson uses exactly the same image:

"There is One Life, but one, that rolls through All,"

He discusses the religion of Nature at some length. Pygmalion's relationship with God is likened to his relationship with his statue. God has hidden himself from man, like the sculptor hiding from his statue behind a screen. At the time of coming to life, the statue would feel, "I live", not, "Who made me?" If Pygmalion were to step forward and use the statue as a slave, it would crave the freedom of an animal or bird. God has no wish to use His power in such a way. Instead He hides Himself from man behind "the Selfhood of Man" until at last man perceives His presence when in need of strength greater than his own.

"So hath the Infinite in wisdom framed
The Finite; on dead dust hath set the seal
Of his own power and beauty, and hath made
That dust obedient to the Life, which He
Hath breathed into it; then hath hid Himself
Behind the Selfhood of the Man, that he,
Wandering alone in light and dark, might feel
At length, that he hath need of other strength
Than his own selfhood, in this might World

Of unimaginable wonderment;
And weep, and tremble, and at last behold
Dimly, as 'twere afar off, the All-father
With arms stretch'd down to him, although he dwells
Not far off, but so nigh to each of us,
That, if His Life were not ours, we were not!"

It is important to realise that Tennyson is not advocating the worship of Nature itself; it is the Life within Nature which is to be worshipped, in order to communicate with God:

"But oh! the Life divine, the only Life
Earthward descends, and not ascends from it;
And secretly, and yet more surely works
Within the inmost temple of man's soul,
Against the many tongues of his Self-love,
Whispering with still small voice, when they are mute."

The notion that the inspiration of the "One Life" glimpsed in Nature can work in a man's soul to make him a better person is also found in Wordsworth, occurring at length in The Prelude, for example³².

Tennyson's Pygmalion is inspired by the inner vision of perfect Beauty which overwhelms his imagination. The poem examines the power of "Phantasy". Pygmalion's imagination is able to create the statue but cannot make it live. He has made the mistake of worshipping the outer form and not the life within. However, when he prays to Urania to help him, he is given that help because he has lived a pure life and upheld the perfection of his vision. The vision gave him a glimpse of divinity, which made him a better person. It is "Immortal Love" which animates the statue, the soul being the source of life and not the outer form. Tennyson's notion of the inner vision of Beauty (the "one Form"³³) is characteristic of Romantic poetry, emphasising as it does the supreme importance of the imagination. It is particularly reminiscent of Shelley's poetic theories. Bowra 21 comments:

"Shelley took Plato's theory of knowledge and applied it to beauty. For him the Ideal Forms are a basis not so much of

knowing as of that exalted insight which is ours in the presence of beautiful things. The poet's task is to uncover this absolute real in its visible examples and to interpret them through it."

The statue is the concrete form of the abstract ideal so firmly fixed in Pygmalion's mind. Once she comes to life, a third aspect of this philosophy of love emerges; woman as "goddess on earth", complementing man's character (cf. Ruskin "Of Queens' Gardens"). Tennyson emphasises the fact that the statue-maiden is the one woman for Pygmalion, that they are destined for one another. The sculptor, inspired by a "pure white image of a purer thought", has lived a blameless life, scorning momentary pleasures of the flesh. His purity of heart is matched by the statue's: her beauty would be destroyed if it were made to live with sin.

The statue's form originated in the glimpse Pygmalion once had of a girl's face in a rose-wood; the image lodged in his heart and inspired him. The real girl, according to Urania, was also affected by seeing Pygmalion but, despite being haunted by his image, she did not make a statue.

" ... Man must throw

His strength out or must perish; woman lives

And feeds upon celestial phantasies,"

Women are not active but passive creatures (again, Tennyson follows Ruskin). Now that the statue lives, she is drawn to Pygmalion as he is to her;

"Beauty is Beauty's mate ... "

They are complementary:

"Not only this, but whatsoe'er she lacks

Thou wilt supply, and what in thee is not

She shall give to thee: ... "

Now that he is united with his "other half", Pygmalion experiences true, perfect love. He sees the difference between the Beauty of Phantasy and that of Nature. He is exultant;

" ... Now had I heard
That paeano of the heart, that triumph-voice
Of Nature and of Being, bliss no more
To be exceeded; ... "

His joy is so complete that he readily would die at this moment in order to preserve it. The poem ends rapturously:

"Love, Love! my own! my only one! Love! Love!"
It is a complete affirmation of the spirit of Victorian optimism, allowing no doubt or dark thought to cast a shadow over its idealised view of human love.

RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

Ernest Hartley Coleridge

Pygmalion's Bride³⁴

There was a king of Cyprus, who, 'tis said,
Carved him a statua of ivory,
Then loving it, for want of better love,
Begged Aphrodite give it life withal,
And she in pity granted him the prayer.
So runs the tale; now, for our benefit,
(Since as I trow it is an allegory,)
This king of Cyprus shall speak first, then I.
This is his garden for the nonce, and he
Is holding converse with his new-born bride:
Hide we behind yon shrub - but hush! they come.

He speaks: "Thou hast no name, most beautiful,
For thou wert parented of Love alone,
Love formed thee of the dust, Love gave thee life,
And Love believeth that thou art alive:
Wherefore I'll call thee Love: Give ear the, Love,
And hearken to my words: The Most High God,

Whose offspring are we all, gave me long erst
Fair gifts: he made me king of Cyprus isle,
Sole sovereign of every lovely thing;
All goodly trees that rest against the sky,
All mighty beasts, and many pasture lands,
Wherein man-loving kine may roam at large;
He gave me wells and springs; nay, furthermore,
He gave me flowers - flowers for a crown,
To crown withal my Cyprus-island Queen -
Flowers that are the glory of all lands.
Then spilling o'er the measure of His love,
He heaped the people's love upon their king.
All love me, not that I am lovable,
But that Zeus willed it; and He made me dwell
In pleasant houses rich with royal things,
Rare gems, and statues, and long colonnades,
That face the rising and the setting sun,
That all day long God's light may shine on me,
Moreover, that I might not lack of aught,
He made me strong, and masterful, and wise:
Yet one thing more, God made me full of tears,
Lest in my pride I might forget to love:
And I for want of this one gift was sad,
This spirit, which of all the islanders
I was the only one who could not call,
And from the vasty deep it would arise
An angel ministrant. Then I sang thus:

Golden locks gleam bright for others,
Rosy lips are red for them;
Never may ye, O my brothers,
Change Love for a diadem.

There is one thing and one only,
That is foul beneath the sun -
Living loveless, dying lonely,
Witness King Pygmalion.

So sang I in my grief, and listlessly
Began to chip a tusk of ivory,
Which some far Ethiop prince of barbarous name,
Along with apes and peacocks and fine gold,
Had sent across the seas - and as I chipped,
Scarce knowing what I did, the ivory
Beneath my chisel seemed to take a form,
As 'twere by some blind chance, and shape itself;
At first a rough and soulless mockery
Of man, God's image. Then I know not how,
Thought kindled thought, and thought and hand were one,
And will absorbed in God's (or as men say,
I could not help it), lo! the human shape
Beneath my hand, or, as I say, God's will,
Wore gentler look, and ever more and more
Its loveliness outmatched its other strength.
This creature I had made was full of love,
A woman excellent, divinely fair,
And on the breathless, soulless ivory
The glory fell, great locks, such as no breath
Of living breeze could nestle in and stir;
Then I knew that I loved with awful love
This strange creation of my seely hands;
What I thought I fashioned, what I fashioned
I loved, and with hot kisses strove to melt
The mocking lips, which kissed me when I touched,
But kissed the air as gladly - then I prayed -

If so be that love's so holy,
Love's perfection is divine,
Aphrodite grant me solely
This my creature to be mine,

If so be that Aphrodite,
Thou canst give us from above
Living beauty, O most mighty,
Breathe upon her life and love!

And Aphrodite granted me the prayer.
For, as I stood and gazed, half doubting all,
Half waiting for the thing to come to pass -
Behold a miracle! Did that breast heave,
Or was it fancy? Did a rosiness
As of faint dawn, a slowly-spreading blush
Come o'er the dead white limbs? And did a breeze
Flutter that tiny tress of golden hair?
Those lips unfold as if they now could kiss?
And last of all, two eyes in wonderment
Look love? And had this soulless ivory
Been transubstantiated into life?
Thou art my living Yea: I need no more,
The end and the beginning of my love,
The maker and the made, the child and sire
Of that great love which God hath sealed to me!"

And what said she? That is not mine to tell:
I think she looked up sweetly in his face,
So sweetly, he forgot himself, and talked
Pure nonsense in the unknown tongue of love.

That's all the tale - my turn again to speak:
Man hungers, thirsts, and knows not what he lacks,
Until he hath discovered what to love;
But all God gives him is some ivory,
Which he must chip, and shape, and polish well,
And make a perfect thing and beautiful,
But trust in God to give it life withal,
Rewarding love with love. I take it thus:
Man sees some girl, mere ivory to him,

And then he fancies, fancies that she's fair
 Until he loves - but she is ivory
 Without God gives the life of love - for though
 We be as cunning as was Phidias,
 And conjure up a vision glorious,
 And worship it ourselves - earthy of earth
 Will such love be, and all our kisses fall
 As vainly as on lips of ivory,
 Unless we pray like King Pygmalion
 To Him "whose nature and whose name is love",
 To breathe upon the clay the breath of love;
 And then, as we have left those blessed two,
 And by this while forgotten that they loved,
 (Though they remember and are loving still)
 So we shall be passed by, as having loved -
 As saith the poet, "loved and therefore lived".

Coleridge (1846-1920) was the son of the Reverend Derwent Coleridge and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's grandson. His interpretation of the legend is the most obviously Christian to be discussed here. Coleridge begins by narrating the story in brief:

"There was a king of Cyprus, who, 'tis said,
 Carved him a statua* of ivory,
 Then loving it, for want of better love,
 Begged Aphrodite give it life withal,
 And she in pity granted him the prayer"

Then he announces his intention of explaining this "allegory" and sets the scene for his audience. Pygmalion is addressing his bride, while the audience hides behind a shrub.

The sculptor begins by naming the statue "Love":
 "For thou wert parented of Love alone,
 Love fomed thee of the dust, Love gave thee life,
 And Love believeth that thou art alive -
 Wherefore I'll call thee Love ... "

The statue represents the one thing Pygmalion did not possess. God had given him everything else: power, wealth, the affection of his

*sic

people. However, apparently in order to remind him of his humanity, God had deprived him of love's comfort. In his grief the sculptor began to chip at an ivory tusk and gradually it took on a human shape.

The work was directly inspired by God and the result was a statue of the perfect woman. Pygmalion fell in love with it and prayed for it to come to life. It is interesting that, even in an overtly Christian interpretation, Coleridge names the deity to whom Pygmalion prayed as Aphrodite. The statue moved and Pygmalion worshipped at her feet. The religious tone of the passage is emphasised by the use of the word "transubstantiated" to describe the process of vivification and the phrase "The end and the beginning", applied to the statue. The two lovers are now united in their happiness.

The poet then takes over the persona of narrator once more to discuss the events he has just described through the character of Pygmalion. He explains the alleged allegory in this way:

"Man hungers, thirsts, and knows not what he lacks,
Until he hath discovered what to love;
But all God gives him is some ivory,
Which he must chip, and shape, and polish well,
And make a perfect thing and beautiful,
But trust in God to give it life withal,
Rewarding love with love ... "

This philosophy is not far removed from that found in Frederick Tennyson's poem. It emphasises the limitations of human powers and the fact that, ultimately, human aspirations depend upon divine aid. The important thing, it would seem, is to do the best one can with what one has and to live as good a life as possible (cf. Morris's message in The Earthly Paradise). We are earth-bound and our passions are earthly; we depend upon God to inspire us with the divinity of eternal love, through which we shall live forever.

Edgar or The New Pygmalion³⁶

In this long verse drama, Ross also attempts a Christian interpretation of the tale. The work, by no means successful, is a strange mixture of genres and styles. It is all too easy to detect the influence of most of the great writers of the past but, unfortunately, they do not make easy bed-fellows. The Book of Job, Milton, Shakespeare, Shelley, Goethe, Sophocles: all are in evidence. The poem contains Choruses, Interludes and Faerie Routs, as well as the more usual acts and scenes of a play. At one and the same time Ross has tried to write a satire on contemporary Victorian life, a classical tragedy in the style of Prometheus Unbound, a Shakespearean tragedy, a Shakespearean comedy and a Christian epic. Not surprisingly, he is unsuccessful but the result is nevertheless interesting.

The original Pygmalion legend has obviously been changed a great deal to accommodate all these different genres. The Pygmalion character is named Edgar, his statue Niobelle. The story is set around the court of the Marquis of Amaralza and, therefore also includes many gentlemen and women. Various sub-plots involving the love-affairs of these courtiers are interwoven with the main action. Court-artists (poets and sculptors) are also introduced into the tale to make a satirical comment on the contemporary world of art. One sculptor, for example, produces a work showing Judas falling to the ground with the guts spewing out of his body; the artist declares, "Nature is absolute: nature is art: art for art's sake, I say"(60). Ross's technique could hardly be called subtle.

The tale does not have its usual happy ending. Edgar loses the love of his statue (who seems to consider him only as a surrogate father in any case) to a young courtier named Julian. There is added pathos in the fact that Julian has already caused the death of a young woman, Clissa, who kills herself when she realises that his

promises of marriage are false. Clissa seems to be Ross's Ophelia. She even kills herself (with a dagger) by a river on a bed of beautiful flowers. Similarly, Edgar soon emerges as a Hamlet-figure, much taken with "th' observing of fools" (118) and gradually driven quite mad by his sorrow.

As it also includes echoes of A Midsummer Night's Dream the work is a strange combination of comedy and tragedy. There are several scenes involving fairies and spirits (including Puck) as well as a scene in which the villagers entertain the court (though this could have come from Love's Labours Lost). However, unlike the fairy scenes in A Midsummer Night's Dream, those in Edgar seem to bear no relation to the rest of the drama and strike a discordant note when set against scenes involving Jehovah, Christ and Choruses of Angels.

The work is presented almost as a series of plays within a play. Edgar's tragedy in the human world is set alongside the business of the fairy world and within a drama involving Jehovah, Satan and Christ, which recalls Goethe's Faust. Edgar is the unfortunate victim of a struggle between Christ and Satan in which Satan is seeking to prove that God creates pain and evil as well as happiness. To this end the sculptor's spirit is taken to heaven and in the process given a glimpse of the beauty there (the result of which, apparently, is Niobelle). His spirit is questioned about man's life and declares that men are more happy than unhappy but that much human love is thwarted. Before his spirit is returned to its sleeping owner, Christ asks Jehovah to give Edgar his loved one. This results in the vivification of Niobelle, which begins the tragedy.

In the last scenes the action returns to heaven. Edgar has perished in madness and Satan claims that this is proof of his assertion that God is responsible for evil and misery in men. Jehovah rejects his argument:

" ... Have I not made e'en thee,
Thou Thing of Evil, knowing what I made?
'Tis man makes his own misery, not God,"

He continues:

" ... For evil is

The complement of good, and goodness is

The light wherein all evil groweth black:

And if I kill the light, what is the darkness?"

Finally, He promises that a time will come when He will make a world,

"Wherein nor good nor evil shall be seen."

Ross has constructed an extremely elaborate drama around the legend of Pygmalion which finally asserts the doctrine of free will. Edgar's tragedy is the result of his inability to accept the loss of Niobelle's love to Julian. Note that Niobelle's story ends no more happily. Edgar forces her back onto her pedestal and prays for her to be turned back to stone (he has already killed Julian before her eyes). The sculptor then smashes her body to pieces with a hammer. God created a situation for good or evil by bringing Niobelle to life; the way it was used is seen as man's (i.e. Edgar's) responsibility. Poor Niobelle is the unfortunate victim of Edgar's love which she did not ask for and which she cannot return. Edgar, in the end, is not a symbol of creativity, as in so many other interpretations, but a wholly destructive force.

Robert Buchanan

Pygmalion the Sculptor³⁷

(text too long to be quoted in full - 5 sections)

It could be argued that Buchanan's version of this tale ends even more pessimistically than Ross's. Buchanan is, of course, renowned for his attack on Dante Gabriel Rossetti in "The Fleshly School of Poetry", an article published in Contemporary Review 18 (October 1871) 334-350. He chose to interpret the legend in a moralistic manner and managed to change the tale into a sinister story about what happens when men are tempted by the pleasures of the flesh. The poem is divided into five sections, the titles of which give a clear

indication of their contents : "Shadow", "The Marble Life", "The Sin", "Death in Life", "Shadow". Buchanan saw the story as a kind of cycle, beginning and ending in the same way.

The poem opens with the revelation that Pygmalion has lost the girl he loved on the very morning they were to be married. He broods upon her death until he has a vision and seems to hear her voice "come down from heaven". She orders him to make a statue of her out of pure marble to "purify" and "heal" himself. He cuts himself off from the outside world and devotes himself to the task she has set him. Throughout the description of this creative process, Buchanan emphasises the purity and whiteness of the stone, the perfection of the image which Pygmalion believes to be within it.

When the statue is finished Pygmalion falls in love with it. As yet his love is pure, the love of a man for what is holy. Gradually, however, this love changes and is overthrown by passion. Buchanan hints at the sexual nature of Pygmalion's feelings for the statue with references to "impiousness" and

" ...tinkling fragments of a song of love,

Warbled by wantons over wine-cups ... "

The sculptor strives against these improper emotions and even wins a temporary respite from them.

Eventually, however, the feelings return and he is drawn to watch the "dewy star of lovers". Buchanan compares its power to that of a snake over its victim. Pygmalion prays for his statue to live, knowing it is wrong to do so. Buchanan picks up the number three in the Ovidian tale (the flame at the altar leaps up three times in answer to the prayer) and uses it in a different way: Pygmalion prays silently three times. The passage is full of unpleasant images which emphasise the wrongness of the sculptor's behaviour. The prayer "blacken'd" across his face and in answer the star "dripping emerald" touched the forehead of the statue with its green light. Pygmalion watches all night and at dawn the statue begins to come to life.

There is no happiness for Pygmalion in his union with the statue. Although she is physically beautiful, she is of the earth and lacks a soul. She has not the divine beauty of his vision and is purely a creature of the flesh. The two of them embark on a debauched feast which lasts for three days and nights. A strong atmosphere of sin and decadence builds up until, on the third night, a cry comes up from the town: a plague has broken out. Pygmalion looks out at the malignant sunset and the people carrying their dead and he perceives the evil in which he has become involved. He flees in horror and roams the country ever after, a warning to those who see him (like Oedipus and the Ancient Mariner or Yeobright in The Return of the Native):

"And some, that sit with lemons over wine,
Or dally idly with the glorious hour,
Turn cynic eyes away and smile aside;
And some are saved because they see me pass,
And, shuddering, yet constant to their task,
Look up for comfort to the silent stars"

Buchanan seems to believe firmly in the evils of the flesh. His Pygmalion is the example of a man who succumbs to such pleasures, seduced by the physical beauty of the statue and forgetting the more important aspect, the soul. The sculptor's story is meant to serve as a warning to us all: we must fix our eyes on heaven and not be tempted into sin by worldly pleasures. It is no wonder that this Scottish poet was outraged by the voluptuous works of Rossetti.

COMIC INTERPRETATIONS

The versions of "Pygmalion" considered so far have all been more or less serious in tone and concerned with Pygmalion as an individual. In contrast, comic interpretations of the legend tend to place it in a social context.

Andrew Lang

The New Pygmalion, or the Statue's Choice³⁹

A Lyric Drama

'l'image que fist Pygmalion,
Qui n'ot pareil premiere ne seconde'.

Persons in the Play.

Pygmalion, a Sculptor of Cyprus

Aphrodite

A Sculptor's Ghost

Statue (afterwards Galataea)

Scene - Pygmalion's Studio. A chryselephantine Statue of a Woman on a pedestal. Pygmalion discovered, heaping incense on an altar at the foot of the pedestal. His costume is sumptuous, and his attitude graceful.

Pygmalion (prays)

Oh Aphrodite, kind and fair,
That what thou wilt canst give,
Oh, listen to a sculptor's prayer,
And bid mine image live!
For me the ivory and gold
That clothe her cedar frame
Are beautiful, indeed, but cold;
Ah, touch them with thy flame!
Oh, bid her move those lips of rose,
Bid float that golden hair,
And let her choose me, as I chose,
This fairest of the fair!
And then an altar in thy court
I'll offer, deck'd with gold;
And there thy servants shall resort,
Thy doves be bought and sold!

(He throws incense on the flame of the altar.)

Exit Pygmalion

A Sculptor's Ghost rises, a sordid figure stained with clay. He peers cautiously around, shuts the trap-door and kneels at the altar. Sculptor's Ghost (prays) O Aphrodite! hear him not,

But turn his words to wind,
And bid this image without spot,
My work, to me be kind.
O goddess! lady of all lands,
Let this fair maid be mine,
For mine the thought, and mine the hands,
That wrought the work divine.

(Throws incense on the flame, and disappears by trap-door.)

The incense smoke thickens, rises into a column, and takes the form of Aphrodite floating among her doves.

Aphrodite (to the Statue). O maiden, in mine image made!

O grace that shouldst endure!
While temples fall, and empires fade,
Immaculately pure:
Exchange thine endless life of art
For beauty that must die,
And blossom with a beating heart
Into mortality!
Change, golden tresses of her hair,
To gold that turns to grey;
Change, silent lips, for ever fair,
To lips that have their day!
Oh, perfect arms, grow soft with life,
Wax warm, ere cold ye wane;
Wake, woman's heart, from peace to strife,
To love, to joy, to pain!

(The Statue moves, and lifts her arms in the attitude of adoration.)

Statue What world is this I know not of,
What flutters in my breast?

Aphrodite 'Tis thy first hour of life and love,
Thy last of dreamless rest!
Descend, and leave thy marble shrine;
Lo! this one day thy birth
And wedding brings; no more divine
Shalt thou inhabit earth!
And thou shalt love the man who wrought
Thine image in such wise
That neither new-born life, nor thought
Add beauty to thine eyes.

(The Goddess fades into the altar smoke)

Enter Pygmalion. He throws himself at the feet of the Statue, who advances to embrace him.

Statue. Ah, who then made me, - was it thou?

And who made thee so fair?

Pygmalion (with presence of mind) I wrought thee, maiden, even now,
From dreams, and clouds, and air!
And thou, that wert my statue, art
My bride while life endure!

Statue A woman with a child-like heart,
'And passionately pure!' (Sculptor's Ghost rises)

Ghost Believe him not - believe him not,
Celestial apparition;
I made thee - I; he only got
(Confound him!) the commission!

Pygmalion Nay, rich men, tyrants, ladies fair,
Have seen me working daily on
Thine image; and in court will swear
The sculptor was - Pygmalion!

Ghost I did the sketch- that scented wretch
Me of mine would rob;
Concealed I lurk, and do the work,
When he's secured the job.

Pygmalion High priests have watched me modelling,
Improving chins and noses!
Begone, thou dull, opprobrious thing,
Thou serpent 'mid the roses!

Ghost Ere he can toil he needs a 'squeeze',
A skull upon a stick!
While independent quite of these
I always do the trick!

Statue Myself will choose: couldst thou design
And finish, furtive one,
Another shape as fair as mine,
To look upon the sun?

Ghost Why, give me time, and give me clay,
And ivory, and gold,
And girls like thee, in bright array,
All Cyprus shall behold.

Statue And thou Pygmalion, couldst thou frame
My shape from gold and wood?

Pygmalion I could not, ah, transcendent dame,
And would not, if I could!

Statue Then thine am I! That envious Ghost
Could fashion, so says he,
A troop of girls, a perfect host,
That might compete with me!
But thou, my sculptor, thou mine own,
Hast no such cursèd art,
And I will be thy bride alone,
All thine this eager heart! (They embrace)

Exit Ghost, swearing in Greek, Etruscan, and Hittite
Curtain

Andrew Lang (1844-1912) was a noted classical scholar, folklorist and also an author of novels and poems. He translated many Greek texts including the Odyssey (with Butcher) 1879, the Iliad (with Leaf and Myers) 1883, the Idylls of Theocritus (1880) and the Homeric Hymns (1899). Probably his best-known work on folklore is Custom and Myth (1884). On a lighter note, he was also responsible for the Yellow, Red, Green, Blue etc. Fairy Books.

Lang's treatment of the Pygmalion myth is brief but incisive. The "Lyric Drama" is prefaced by a quotation;

"L'image que fist Pygmalion,

Qui n'ot pareil premiere ne seconde".

The importance of these words only becomes completely clear at the very end of the poem: Pygmalion's statue has no equal and is quite determined never to have one.

Lang uses the ancient tale to satirize the contemporary art world and also to comment on the vanity whose name is woman. The entire drama takes place in Pygmalion's studio. He is discovered praying to Venus at the foot of the statue (it seems that Lang too identified the goddess with the marble maiden). Pygmalion wants the statue brought to life and is making a business proposition to Venus; the life of the maiden for a golden altar. Despite Pygmalion's hard-headed attitude, it should be noted that he does not wish the statue to be forced into a relationship with him. It does not, however, seem to occur to him that she might refuse:

"And let her choose me, as I chose,

This fairest of the fair!"

Suddenly a "Sculptor's Ghost" appears out of a trap-door and prays to Aphrodite that he may be given the love of the statue, not Pygmalion. It is obvious that this is the real sculptor, the true artist and creator of the statue (despite his ghostly and sordid appearance). Pygmalion is the grand master, the socially successful but untalented owner of the studio, whose practice is to allow his employees to do the real work so that he can ostentatiously put the

finishing touches to fine works of art and then take all the credit. Despite his graceful and solid form, he is the mere transparent image of a sculptor.

Aphrodite brings the statue to life and gives her the choice: Pygmalion or the Sculptor's Ghost. She is to love the man who made her but is given no clue as to which man it is. Pygmalion, with great presence of mind, immediately claims that honour in a small speech which is yet overpoweringly flattering. The Sculptor denies Pygmalion's claim:

"I made thee - I; he only got
(Confound him!) the commission!

There is no doubt when the audience believes but the statue must choose. She asks each man a question: could he make another like her? This is the Sculptor's undoing. He is not skilled in the ways of the world (and women) and thinks he is being asked to prove his artistic skill, a skill which obviously far outweighs his social cunning. He proudly replies that, given the materials, he could make endless statues as lovely as her. He has mistaken the real nature of the question.

Pygmalion is not so naïve; he immediately sees what is really required. His reply is extremely clever:

"I could not, ah, transcendent dame,
And would not, if I could!"

The audience realises the reason for Pygmalion's great success despite his lack of artistic ability compared to the Sculptor; he is skilled socially and can create the illusion of creativity (in short, a confidence trickster). His reply is exactly what the statue wants to hear; a confirmation of her own individual superiority over all other women. She wants no rivals in beauty and so she immediately chooses Pygmalion, not because of his sculpting skills but precisely because he does not possess "such cursèd art". The Ovidian tale is reversed; it is Pygmalion's lack of artistic skill which wins him the statue and the real artist (the Ghost) is forced to depart, "swearing in Greek, Etruscan, and Hittite".

Pygmalion and Galatea⁴⁰

This play, "an original mythological comedy", was first produced at the Haymarket theatre on December 9, 1871. It was a remarkable success and was revived at the Lyceum in 1884 and again in 1888. According to the Daily Telegraph (May 30, 1911), Gilbert made £40,000 out of the play.

Gilbert uses the old myth to make satirical comments on the Victorian art world. Chrysos (a significant name) is the epitome of the vulgar Victorian "patron", a man with lots of money and no taste, who measures the value of a piece of sculpture by its weight. The scene in which he attempts to buy Galatea's statue from Pygmalion is full of witty attacks on the kind of person he represents. The statue is modelled on Pygmalion's wife. Chrysos has already sent his slave to announce his arrival in a most arrogant fashion and it is clear that his presence is supposed to be a great honour. He and his wife have been rude enough to spy on Pygmalion's work during a previous visit to his studio and so they know of the statue's existence. Chrysos' wife, Daphne, is as unpleasant as he is and gives the following advice during the negotiations for the statue:

" ... Give money for the stone,
I've heard that it is far beyond all price,
But run it down; abuse it ere you buy."

Chrysos attempts to criticise the statue, using words and phrases which he obviously does not understand (to the amusement of the sculptor) but his efforts are in vain: Pygmalion will not sell. Chrysos' complete lack of appreciation for the true value of art is evident when he exclaims:

" ... Pooh, pooh!
I give a thousand drachmas for a stone
Which in the rough would not fetch half that sum!"

He is furious to be refused by a mere artist:

"Confound it - if a patron of the arts
Is thus to be dictated to by art,
What comes of that art patron's patronage?"

Poor Chrysos - far from teaching Pygmalion a lesson, he comes to regret ever having seen the statue of Galatea.

Gilbert's Pygmalion is not the misogynist of the Ovidian tale. He is married to a very beautiful woman, Cynisca (another significant name), who is the model for all his statues. In fact, the love story usually associated with Pygmalion and his statue is transferred to Pygmalion and Cynisca. She was a devotee of Artemis and had promised to remain chaste. However, when she fell in love with Pygmalion the goddess released her from her vow, and at the same time gave her a terrible gift, the power to blind her husband if he should be unfaithful (cf. the Daphnis story: Timaeus {ap. Parth. 29}). The ability was also given to Pygmalion but he is not presented as a character sufficiently jealous ever to have used the awful gift.

The main plot concerns what happens when Cynisca goes away for a few days. Pygmalion has just completed a particularly fine statue of her (Galatea) and when he protests that he will be lonely without her, Cynisca tells him to regard the statue as her proxy during her absence. The jest misfires when Galatea comes to life. There is also a sub-plot revolving around the courtship of Myrine, Pygmalion's sister, by the soldier Leucippus.

All these characters are profoundly affected by Galatea's vivification. Her short life (she becomes a statue again in the final scene; the whole action is set within a space of twenty-four hours) serves to emphasise the hypocrisy riddling everyday society. She is (selectively) innocent and naïve⁴¹, reacting with total honesty in all situations. As a result she causes embarrassment and confusion. In fact she cannot be tolerated in this so-called civilized society. Her qualities also serve as a contrast to the shortcomings of others, particularly Cynisca. In the end she sacrifices her life and happiness for Pygmalion and teaches the beautiful Cynisca the meaning of pity and

love. Gilbert reverses the obvious interpretations of the two characters; it is the statue-girl who possesses the qualities of warmth, kindness and pity while the human woman is cold, pitiless and hard.

The clearest example of how Galatea exposes society's hypocrisy occurs in the scenes involving the death of Myrine's pet fawn. Galatea is horrified when she is first introduced to Leucippus and told of his profession. She sees him as a "paid assassin" and is quite terrified of him. Her terror is redoubled when she sees him with a dying fawn in his arms. She does not know that some lives (human) are considered more precious than others (animal) and regards his careless slaughter of the animal as a most terrible crime. When Leucippus has left and Myrine returns, Galatea recounts her story with horror. She cannot name the creature killed because she does not recognise it and her conversation leads Myrine to believe that a young woman has been murdered. She is quite appalled and refuses to see Leucippus again. The misunderstanding is resolved at the end of the play when Myrine discovers that it is only the life of a fawn that has been taken and is fully reconciled to her lover, particularly when he cooks the animal for her.

This is only one of several misunderstandings created by Galatea's innocence and Pygmalion is convinced that he is being punished for his presumption in praying for his statue to live. When Galatea asks him why she has been sent to him, he replies:

"I cannot say - unless to punish me
For unreflecting and presumptuous prayer!
I prayed that thou shouldst live - I have my prayer,
And now I see the fearful consequence
That must attend it! "

It is clear that poor Galatea cannot be accepted by society and her return to stone is the only solution for the other characters' problems. Pygmalion is quite right when he exclaims:

"She is not fit to live upon this world!"

She is too good, too innocent and too honest. However, by the end of

the play her experiences of civilized society have taught her one thing - bitterness:

" ... Nay - let me go from him
That curse - his curse - still ringing in mine ears,
For life is bitterer to me than death."

Gilbert calls his play "a mythological comedy" and there is indeed much comedy in it. For example, when Galatea first meets Chrysos, she commiserates with him for having been made by a beginner; only a learner could have produced such an ugly piece of work. However, the tale is also a tragedy, certainly for Galatea, and the audience is uncomfortably aware that it contains an indictment of society. The qualities which society claims to prize so highly (innocence, simplicity, honesty) it finds unacceptable in everyday life.

G.B. Shaw

Pygmalion⁴²

Back to Methuselah⁴³

Gilbert's Pygmalion and Galatea emphasises Galatea's inability to fit into contemporary society. Shaw, in Pygmalion, chose to show how a person could be moulded to fit into a society as alien as Pygmalion's was to Galatea. The metamorphosis of Eliza Doolittle from flower-girl to fake duchess is famous, especially after its own metamorphosis into a stage musical. The play itself is short but Shaw added a Preface and an Epilogue, both of which indicate the consideration he gave the legend when writing Pygmalion.

The play was written in 1912, and first produced in Berlin in 1913; it arrived on the English stage on April 11, 1914 at His Majesty's Theatre. Mrs. Patrick Campbell played Eliza and Beerbohm Tree was Higgins. Shaw himself produced the play. Pygmalion was a great success and apparently Tree (also the theatre's manager) made £13,000 from it in three months (R.F. Rattray Bernard Shaw: A Chronicle [London 1951] 189).

In the Preface, Shaw explains how he became interested in phonetics in the eighteen-seventies. He asserts:

"The reformer we need most today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast: that is why I have made such a one the hero of a popular play".

(cf. the crusade of Shaw and Higgins against bad English pronunciation with Pygmalion's reaction to the Propoetides). It seems that Shaw saw English speech itself as undergoing a most unwelcome metamorphosis, one which could only be stopped by phoneticians. He discusses the work of one phonetician in particular, Henry Sweet. Shaw makes it clear that Higgins is not a portrait of Sweet but possesses some of his characteristics (one suspects the less pleasant ones). There can be no doubt that we are meant to draw a lesson from the play. Shaw referring to art, declares:

"... I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else."

The metamorphosis of Eliza in the play is achieved only with much pain on both sides, though mainly on Eliza's. It is important to remember that the experiment cannot be termed a complete success. The bet was to pass Eliza off as a lady at the ambassador's party and this is done but Nepommuck, the bogus phonetician, is convinced that she is Hungarian not English. His reason for this belief is that she speaks English too perfectly. Note that in Ovid, the statue is perfectly, super-humanly beautiful ("qua femina nasci/nulla potest"). Moreover, the change, though impressive, actually makes her unfit for normal life. She was quite happy as a flower-girl and her speech suited her way of life perfectly. After she had learned to speak "properly", she could no longer be a flower-girl but neither could she join the social group whose speech she had adopted because she possessed none of the other social graces⁴⁴. (or its economic *raison d'être*).

In Shaw's version the ideal woman is represented by Higgins' mother. She is his Venus, so strong and intelligent that he finds all

other women lacking. Shaw explains that she is the reason why Higgins is a confirmed bachelor and he expands the notion in the Epilogue:

"If an imaginative boy has a sufficiently rich mother who has intelligence, personal grace, dignity of character without harshness, and a cultivated sense of the best art of her time to enable her to make her house beautiful, she sets a standard for him against which very few women can struggle, besides effecting for him a disengagement of his affections, his sense of beauty, and his idealism from his specifically sexual impulses".

(this separation does not exist in the original Pygmalion legend). For Higgins, the ideal woman and Galatea⁴⁵ are two different characters. However, his image of ideal womanhood (his mother) prevents him from marrying just as Ovid's Pygmalion fails to marry because he is haunted by an ideal.

Mrs. Higgins' sitting-room is described in great detail in Shaw's stage-directions (beginning Act III)⁴⁶. It testifies to her character and past beauty. Her wall-paper and furnishings are of a Morris pattern. She "was brought up on Morris and Burne-Jones". "A few good oil paintings from the exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery thirty years ago (the Burne-Jones, not the Whistler side of them) are on the walls". One of these is "a portrait of Mrs. Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful Rossetti costumes which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular estheticism in the eighteen-seventies". Thus Shaw juxtaposes the real woman with her image.

If Mrs. Higgins is Venus, then Eliza is Galatea. However, Shaw does not end his play with a union between Eliza and Higgins. In the Epilogue, he explains at length the psychological realism of the play and its inevitable sequel. He is contemptuous of people who want "happy endings":

"The rest of the story need not be shown in action, and indeed, would hardly need telling if our imaginations were not so

enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of "happy endings" to misfit all stories".

The lengthy explanations of what happens after the end of the play is Shaw's attempt to frustrate the efforts of the actors, who tried to indicate an eventual union between Higgins and Eliza in their performance. Tree threw a bunch of flowers across the stage to Mrs. Campbell just as the curtain fell, much to Shaw's fury.

Shaw carefully discusses the personalities of his characters in order to show that Eliza is bound to marry Freddy, not Higgins. As he observes, strong people are attracted to weak and vice versa. Moreover, Eliza realises that she could never be Higgins' "nearest and fondest and warmest interest", could never "obtain a complete grip of him". In these circumstances, according to Shaw, she will inevitably turn to Freddy, although her interest in and involvement with Higgins will never cease. Shaw has already emphasised the way parents affect their children's models of what men and women should be (Higgins' idealisation of his mother so that other women cannot compete with her standards). Now he observes that the opposite can be true. Eliza's father has provided her with a clear model of the kind of man to avoid in marriage. "She knows that Higgins does not need her, just as her father did not need her". Indeed Doolittle is a neat Umkehrung of Higgins⁴⁷.

According to Meisel 161, there were three characteristic story motifs in nineteenth-century Romantic Comedy:

"The first was misalliance between classes. The second, closely related to the first, was a Cinderella-Galatea motif of transformation and testing. The third was the opposition of youth and age".

Shaw introduces a second Cinderella-Galatea motif into his story with the transformation of Doolittle from lazy, immoral, penniless dustman to rich Society character. This comes about when he is left a fortune by an eccentric millionaire who had been much attracted to his "Nietzschean transcendence of good and evil": an obvious example of

the fairy godmother motif in the Cinderella story. In some ways his fame and fortune change Doolittle not at all but his amoral precepts are gradually eroded by his acceptance into Society. He actually marries the woman he lives with (another Umkehrung of the Propoetides-Pygmalion situation). Shaw even notes in the Epilogue that he finds it difficult to fulfil his social engagements "on four thousand a year".

Another transformation, also effected by a "fairy godmother", occurs in the case of Clara, Freddy's sister. Throughout the play she is presented as a snob and a failed social-climber. However, in the Epilogue Shaw describes how her character and life are changed dramatically by her discovery of the writings of H.G. Wells:

"It (Eliza's metamorphosis) shook her so violently, that when Mr. H.G.Wells lifted her on the point of his puissant pen, and placed her at the angle of view from which the life she was leading, and the society to which she clung, appeared in its true relation to real human needs and worthy social structure, he effected a conversion and a conviction of sin comparable to the most sensational feats of General Booth or Gypsy Smith. Clara's snobbery went bang."

Clearly Clara retains some of her former characteristics, most notably what Shaw calls "Push". However, H.G. Wells transformed her life as surely as any fairy godmother could.

Higgins, on the other hand, remains unchanged throughout the play. Just as Shaw separates the theme of metamorphosis from that of the ideal woman (Eliza and Mrs. Higgins), he also seems to separate the image of the statue from these other two elements. He ends the Epilogue with a brief discussion of Eliza's attitude towards Higgins after her marriage:

"She has even secret mischievous moments in which she wishes she could get him alone, on a desert island, away from all ties and with nobody else in the world to consider, and just drag him off his pedestal and see him making love like any other common man".

Thus even the statue-motif is reversed. Higgins, the shape of Eliza,

is also the statue-figure himself. Shaw ends the whole work with an epigram which gives an interesting twist to the old legend:

"Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable."

Although the story of Eliza and Higgins is entitled Pygmalion the legend could be said to be treated more thoroughly in Back to Methuselah. Back to Methuselah is described by Meisel 412 as

"the first of Shaw's Philosophical Extravaganzas ... conceived as a cycle of five plays presenting a complete synopsis - historical, political, scientific, and religious - of Shaw's vision of life in general."

There are elements of "Pygmalion" in the first part ("In the Beginning") but the story occurs most clearly in Part Five, "As Far as Thought can Reach". It is the year 31,920 A.D. Man has evolved to a stage where he is born from an egg, already an adolescent in bodily development. He lives the equivalent of fifty years in four and then becomes an Ancient, spurning everything except thought and almost immortal (after many hundreds of years, Ancients generally have Fatal Accidents).

The central part of the play concerns the attempts of one Pygmalion to make living replicas of human beings. He succeeds (with the help of a sculptor, Martellus) but Ozymandias and Cleopatra-Semiramis (his creations) are mere creatures of reflex, dangerous and uncontrollable. They accidentally kill Pygmalion and then themselves die soon afterwards. According to the Ancients these replicas are mere dolls, more complicated versions of the old rag dolls babies play with. Similarly art is a toy and the human body is "the last doll to be discarded". It is a process of development: the rag doll is replaced by artistic replicas, then automata, then the real man until finally the only reality is realised - the inner self. This is the stage reached by the Ancients. Even then they are not content; they strive to rid themselves of their bodies and become vortices, pure intelligence.

There are several similarities between "As Far as Thought Can Reach" and Gilbert's Pygmalion and Galatea, particularly the relationship between Galatea and Shaw's Newly Born. As Meisel 419 explains:

"Both figures function dramatically as an advanced consciousness come into the world in a wholly virgin state - as a young woman born fully grown and articulate, but with innocent eyes and naïve modes of expression. The difference is that Galatea's direct responses and naïve simplicity are the measure of her superiority to the world and the standpoint from which it is judged, whereas the direct responses and naïve crudities of the Newly Born are the measure of her immaturity".

Gilbert's Pygmalion has a more sophisticated counterpart in Shaw's Martellus. Martellus (the artist half of the creator; Pygmalion is the scientist half) has outgrown the romantic idealism of the Gilbertian Pygmalion. Instead of trying to represent external beauty, he is concerned with the representation of thought. Even so, his ultimate aim is the creation of life.

"As Far as Thought Can Reach" makes an interesting comparison with Shaw's Pygmalion. The Ancients maintain that men only have creative power over themselves, that "you can create nothing but yourself", a clear paradox and an apparent condemnation of Higgins' contention that he created a new person in Eliza. Presumably, Higgins could be said to be at the fourth stage of development, beyond automata but not yet aware of the only reality of the inner self. Shaw himself calls Pygmalion a "shameless potboiler" (Back to Methuselah Postscript V) but admits that even in this light-hearted play, the serious theme of "evolution" keeps creeping in. In a sense, then, Pygmalion is a preparation for Back to Methuselah, Shaw's expression of his own philosophy of "Creative Evolution".

In the Postscript, Shaw argues that Back to Methuselah should be considered a World Classic. He seems to identify himself with his own Pygmalion/Martellus figure:

"Like Shakespear* again, I was a born dramatist, which means a born artist-biologist struggling to take biology a step forward on its way to positive science from its present metaphysical stage in which the crude facts of life and death, growth and decay, evolution and reversion, consciousness and unconsciousness, self-preservation and selfservice, defy the methods of investigation we employ in our research laboratories, and have to be made apprehensible by fictions, pictures, and symphonies in which they are instinctively arranged in a manner which gives a mysterious pleasure to some of the readers, spectators, and listeners, and provokes others to passionate denial and persecution."

For the proponent of Creative Evolution, the tradition of the artist-creator Pygmalion is bound to be a central theme.

Thomas Woolner

Pygmalion (a poem)⁴⁸ (text too long to be quoted at length - 12 books)

This extremely long poem does not fit conveniently into any category but is important because Woolner was himself a sculptor. He was, moreover, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and uses this story to give expression to his philosophy of realism in art. He also explores the problems of being an artist in society and the relationship between artist, creation and model or inspiration.

The main story of the poem revolves around Pygmalion himself and can be divided into two episodes: Pygmalion and Ianthé, and pygmalion and Bacis. The first is the love-story generally associated with Pygmalion's name. The second explores Pygmalion's relationship with society in general and other artists in particular. Woolner uses this second episode especially to comment on contemporary life.

Pygmalion is a famous, wealthy sculptor. He specialises in works of the gods, particularly for the temples, apparently the highest
*sic

form of art in his society. His mother, widow of a great soldier, is attended by twelve hand-maidens, each of whom seem to exemplify one or more aspect of perfect femininity⁴⁹. One of these girls, Ianthe, is serving food to Pygmalion one day when he glimpses in her face the exact expression he wishes to capture for his current statue (Hebe serving Zeus). Ianthe agrees to sit for the statue but, as work progresses, Pygmalion despairs because the image lacks "the spark" he is trying to capture. The reader, of course, realises the implications of this long before the sculptor.

Pygmalion prays to Aphrodite for Life to be given to his statue and she agrees to help but warns that he will have to endure "Dire hate" and "Foul calumny" before finding happiness. The statue then does come to life, though not in the sense usually associated with the Pygmalion legend. The sculptor suddenly realises that Ianthe is his Hebe, that her face wears the expression he was pursuing when she addresses him. The two confess their love for each other and Pygmalion rushes to break the news to his mother, crying, "Hebe? She is come to life". However, the story does not end happily here.⁵⁰

Pygmalion's cry is echoed around the town and soon a rumour arises that the statue has actually come to life. The sculptor has a rival, Bacis, who wrongly blames him for the loss of an important commission for one of the city's temples. Pygmalion had helped the young man to become a sculptor but Bacis would not follow his advice and the quality of his work was limited as a result. Pygmalion is also very unpopular with a group of young artists who disagree with his artistic principles, being themselves "Fierce in archaic quaint proclivities".

These enemies work together to foster rumours calculated to ruin the sculptor. He is alleged to have murdered a young girl and mixed her blood with the clay to make his statue live. Gradually Pygmalion is shunned and despised. Finally an attempt is made on his life but foiled when his soldier-friend Orsines arrives to help him. Immediately Bacis and his fellow-conspirators are exposed and

public opinion swings to support Pygmalion. If anything, his standing is higher than ever. Eventually he is made King of Cyprus, after leading the people to victory over a threatened invasion from Egypt.

Both sections of this long tale involve the theme of metamorphosis. In the first, the statue of Hebe comes metaphorically to life as Pygmalion becomes aware of his love for Ianthe. In the second, the popular, respected sculptor is changed by rumour alone into an evil murderer and then re-established as a good man. Woolner was obviously very concerned about the effect of public opinion upon the artist and attacks its fickleness and hypocrisy:

"And thus from baseless calumny the herd
Of rich and poor, thoughtless as sheep that bleat,
Passed into senseless ecstasy of laud."

There may be a personal note in Woolner's condemnation. He himself emigrated to Australia because of his lack of success in England, an event which is said to be the inspiration for Ford Madox Brown's painting "The Last of England".

Bacis is at the centre of the conspiracy against Pygmalion and in his discussion of the young man's motives, Woolner displays typically class-conscious Victorian attitudes. Bacis, it appears, could never have been a great artist like Pygmalion because he was born in the gutter. His upbringing meant that he never saw enough of what is good and beautiful, only the misshapen and wrong. He lacked the quality of nobility (which, by definition, was concentrated in the upper classes) and was unable to overcome this handicap of birth. As a result, he was only fit to make comic heads and poor pottery for the masses. The moral is evident:

"A fish on land is but an awkward beast"

Woolner obviously sympathised with Ruskin's ideas; only a good man can create truly great art and baseness in the nature of the creator is reproduced in the creation.

One of the great burdens of the rich and famous, according to Woolner, is susceptibility to the effects of rumour. Pygmalion

refers to another in his defence against the charge that he did not mix in the games:

"I mix in every public game, and am
One of the Chiefs; made one by better skill!
That I should mix in little games and feasts
Is the inanity of recklessness.
Those who have nothing have the fewest cares;
But I have vineyards, corn countries and woods;
Store-houses, quays, an active fleet of ships;
All which, tho' I have trusty heads, demand
Some thought of me, and that too, closely given."

The view that those "who have nothing have the fewest cares" seems only to be held by those who have a great deal. A Luddite philosophy seems to prevail among the market craftsmen of Cyprus. They are angry and afraid that the "living statues" may become popular because they are too frightened to undertake the deed which they believe creates such works of art, the murdering of young girls. Instead they turn their anger and frustration against the alleged originator of this threat to their trade and are only too happy to cause his fall.

Pygmalion, because of his intrinsic goodness, survives all these troubles and is eventually raised to the status of King. Woolner seems to introduce a Christian element into the story; Aphrodite promises Pygmalion ultimate bliss but he must first endure great sufferings, a kind of purgatory. Woolner hints at his intention of writing a moral poem in the Prelude, although he claims to leave explanation of the lesson to others. He exclaims:

"That Love should turn from Love and paradise
To riches, vanity, or vice;
Barter the glory of a life's content,
Is marvel and bewilderment!"

Pygmalion, indeed, does no such thing. He is rewarded for his piety and purity of heart by Aphrodite and is given Ianthe. He proves his worth again by surviving the campaign of calumnies and then beating off the attack of the Egyptians. Finally, he accepts the crown of Cyprus when Ianthe explains to him that the Gods place the heaviest burdens on those they love best:

"A rugged path Pygmalion has to tread;
But in his home there will be peace and calm.
He knows the Gods are just. Let that suffice"

It is perhaps not unreasonable to take the second section of the story as an allegory of the artist's public life, as the first is clearly an allegory of the artist's private struggle for "the spark" which would lift his creations to greatness. The artist has to struggle against the vicissitudes of fluctuating public opinion. He must not allow his purity of vision and craft to be corrupted by the temptations of wealth and power. He must take some part in public affairs but this must not conflict with his private artistic life. Great sacrifices may be required (it is even implied that Pygmalion will have to give up his art in order to be King) but Woolner's consistent message seems to be that virtue is its own reward and that the highest art is created by the noblest minds.

In the opening lines of the poem, Woolner describes Pygmalion's vision of his art:

"Men made in marble look but men, no more;
But Gods in sculpture are immortal powers
To whom we kneel helplessly lost in awe.
Man wrought the men and also wrought the Gods.
In making Gods doth Pallas give device,
And Hermes put strange cunning in the hand,
And Hyperion fill the eyes with light,
Such greatness shows when mortals work for Gods."

Pygmalion wishes to bring to life the divine creations so that ordinary men may understand "the Gods' own language, sculpture", and be exalted by it. However, he is shown his error when he prays to Aphrodite for his statue's life. She does not vivify the stone. Instead she reveals to him the living person who is his Hebe. He has been looking at things from the wrong direction. The way to inspire men is not to bring the gods to earth but to be a god on earth oneself, just as Ianthe is Hebe's human reflection. Man can draw inspiration from art (as Pygmalion does himself) but he must also try to be an inspiration

to those around him every day.

Pygmalion sets just such an example for the people of Cyprus. The Pre-Raphaelite philosophy of realism in art is taken to its logical conclusion: art and reality are combined.

NOTES

1. See especially Raymond Williams' discussion of the Romantic artist in Culture and Society 1780-1950 (London 1958) Chapter 2.
2. Williams 48.

"What were seen at the end of the nineteenth century as disparate interests, between which a man must choose and in the act of choice declare himself poet or sociologist, were, normally at the beginning of the century, seen as interlocking interests: a conclusion about personal feeling became a conclusion about society, and an observation of natural beauty carried a necessary moral reference to the whole and unified life of man".

He goes on to show that the dissociation was not, however, entirely the fault of Victorian misinterpretation, that it was "in part a product of the nature of the Romantic attempt". It is certainly easy to see how the Romantic emphasis on the "superior reality" of art could lead to its becoming a special category rather than part of general human experience.
3. Bentham does not divide arts from sciences, in fact. Instead, he makes a division between arts and sciences "of amusement and curiosity" and those "of utility, immediate and remote". The fine arts came under the heading "arts and sciences of amusement".

He continues:

"The utility of all these arts and sciences, - I speak both of those of amusement and curiosity, - the value which they possess, is exactly in proportion to the pleasure they yield. ... Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry".
(The Rationale of Reward. Book 3, Chapter 1)

He also attacks poetry as being the opposite of truth and describes the poet's business as "stimulating our passions, and exciting our prejudices."
4. See, for example, Ford Madox Brown's "Work", now in Manchester City Art Gallery. The artist had to accompany the painting with a written explication of its meaning.
5. The most obvious example of a man who claimed to follow this doctrine is, of course, Oscar Wilde. He has long been identified with his character Lord Henry in The Picture of Dorian Grey and Henry's immoral attitude is assumed to be his own. However, Raymond Williams argues in Wilde's favour and concludes, "in Wilde the pursuit of an isolated aesthetic pleasure is accompanied by a general humanity which is a real ground for respect" (175). Instead he proposes Whistler as a prime example of a follower of the doctrine and supports his suggestion with quotations to show that "Whistler is Pater vulgarized" (171).
6. This conflict is perhaps best observed in Tennyson's poem "The Palace of Art": the artist is tempted to withdraw into the world of art but eventually realises that his duty is to society.

7. The ideal of male chastity was, of course, Sir Galahad (see Tennyson The Idylls of the King "The Holy Grail"). However, all Arthur's knights took a vow of chastity until marriage, as he reminds Guinevere when her adultery has destroyed the Round Table; they swore:
 "To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,
 Until they won her, ... " ("Guinevere")
 Coventry Patmore in The Angel in the House declares:
 "Who is the happy husband? He
 Who, scanning his unwedded life,
 Thanks Heaven, with a conscience free,
 'Twas faithful to his future wife" (Canto 5, Prelude 3)
 As a father, he also urged his son to be good. "To be always strictly honest, always to tell the simple truth, and to be pure (you know what I mean) are the most important things ." (letter to his son Tennyson, reported by Derek Patmore in The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore {London 1949} 110).
8. The whole concept is the central theme of Coventry Patmore's enormously popular poem The Angel in the House (1854).
9. According to Houghton there were several reasons for the undoubted increase in prostitution at this time. The Industrial Revolution led to the growth of large, anonymous cities and a starvation level of wages for women. Prostitution was often the only way to earn enough money to live. There was also a large armed force now kept on a permanent basis, generally separated from its womenfolk. Thirdly, middle and upper class men were now required to have a high standard of income before it was considered suitable for them to marry. They had to be able to provide their wives with a comfortable life-style and the level of income required meant that they could rarely marry before about the age of thirty. As they were not all likely to remain celibate until this age, there was an obvious market for prostitution.
10. This theme is at the centre of Tennyson's Idylls of the King. The entire society of Arthurs's court, based on the highest ethics of purity and virtue, is destroyed by the canker of adultery and with the destruction of the court comes the destruction of the whole land. This poem seemed to sound a terrible warning to many Victorians, who were, of course, imbued with the notion of the poet as a prophet and sage, a notion particularly associated with Tennyson himself.
11. Reproduced by Noel Annan in Leslie Stephen, His Thought and Character in Relation to his Time (London 1951) 75. Leslie Stephen was, of course, the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography and father of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell. His love for Julia led him after her death, to write an autobiographical letter to their children (they both had children by a previous marriage), explaining their relationship. This letter has now been edited by Alan Bell and published as Sir Leslie Stephen's

Mausoleum Book (Oxford 1977). The original manuscript is in the British Library.

12. Houghton uses a phrase significant for the Pygmalion theme when he discusses the reaction of the intellectual (387):
"For the intellectual burdened with a sense of weakness, stemming partly from lack of 'blood' and partly from the frustrations of long analysis and reading and debate, the image of woman could take on the character of a Phidian statue. She could become an incarnation of the simplicity and force of elemental nature, possessed of the very strength man lacks - and to which he eagerly turns."
13. Jenkyns in his chapter "The Consequences of Sculpture" seeks to analyse the erotic attraction of classical statues, both male and female, for the Victorians. He discusses at some length the significance of the whiteness of such statues but it is sufficient to say that white was, for the Victorians, the colour of passionless purity. He sums up the contradiction inherent in the male Victorian attitude towards his wife:
"She was to be an angel in the house, with an angel's passionless insubstantiality, conforming painlessly to the shape of her husband's character and wishes; at the same time she must offer the more substantial delights of solid, compliant flesh. Angel and mistress, vision and reality - surely only a statue come to life could perform all these functions." (143)
14. In Death's Disguises and Other Sonnets London 1887
15. In The Writings of Arthur Hallam ed. T.H. Vail Matter London 1943
16. Arthur Hallam (1811-1833) was engaged to be married to Emily, Alfred Tennyson's sister, but died before the marriage could take place. He was a close friend of Tennyson and "In Memoriam" is the poet's homage to that friendship.
17. See, for example, Blake's Annotations to Berkeley's "Sirius"
"This is my Opinion, but Forms must be apprehended by Sense or the Eye of Imagination. Man is All Imagination God is Man and exists in us and we in him". (219)
"Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man". (204)
A Vision of the Last Judgement 69-70
"All things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the divine body of the Saviour, the True Vine of Eternity, The Human Imagination, who appear'd to me as Coming to Judgement among his Saints and throwing off the Temporal that the Eternal might be Establish'd,"
18. In Poems London 1880
19. C.M. Bowra The Romantic Imagination (Oxford 1950) 276

20. Bowra 278 notes that Romantic poetry, with its emphasis on vague visions and sweet sadness, can all too easily descend into nonsense. He pointedly compares the work of the great Romantics and the nonsense verse of Edward Lear . and, as he points out:
 "In his emotions and his methods, Lear bears a startling resemblance to some of the Romantic poets, and his unprecedented art raises awkward questions about their achievement."
21. In Poems (new ed.) London 1862
22. This was the subject of one of Coleridge's best-known poems. Geoffrey Grigson attempts to explain its Romantic image (The Harp of Aeolus and other Essays on Art, Literature and Nature {London 1949} Chapter 3)
23. The reference to a rainbow, particularly after the description of chaos, inevitably recalls the imagery of Genesis.
24. In Pygmalion in Cyprus and Other Poems London 1880
25. "Yea! this I will perform.
 For there are na'ads, here, on Cyprus' sands,
 And I will choose the best for my demands.

 And here, of matchless form
 (And thou shalt blush to see't), she shall be brought
 Swift to thy sight and clipp'd as soon as caught.

 And white and bright of blee,
 And lithe of limb, and statue-like as thou,
 She shall be naked, too (as thou art now);

 And kiss and compass me,
 And call me wanton names, and bite my cheek,
 And bring me to the ground albeit so weak.

 Yea, like an Amazon,
 Will she assail me, till I prove my right,
 I who am man, to conquer in the fight. "
26. Metamorphoses. 10. 489, ff
 "... nam crura loquentis
 terra supervenit, ruptosque obliqua per ungues
 porrigitur radix, longi firmamina trunci,
 ossaque robur agunt, mediaque manente medulla
 sanguis it in sucos, in magnos bracchia ramos,
 in parvos digiti, duratur cortice pellis.
 iamque gravem crescens uterum perstrinxerat arbor
 pectoraque obruerat collumque operire parabat:
 non tulit iam moram venientique obvia ligno
 subsedit mersitque suos in cortice vultus."

cf. "Yea, slowly to the chin,
 As water riseth o'er a drowning man,
 Thou dost receive the stone that is thy ban;
 And canst not stir therein,
 But wildly up and down dost wag thy face,
 As thou wouldst yell at me, or weep apace."

27. See Praz, especially Chapter 3, "The Shadow of the Divine Marquis".

28. In Daphne and Other Poems London 1891

29. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was well-known in the nineteenth century, if only as a spiritualist and ghost-seer. His philosophy, expounded in many volumes, may be summarized in brief: God is the life of His Creation: Creation in itself is deadness and nothingness: God and Life are convertible terms: finally, all things in Creation share a common Life, their difference lying in the way and the degree to which they show forth that Life.

Swedenborg's philosophies form the central theme of Sheridan Le Fanu's novel Uncle Silas (1864). The heroine's father is a Swedenborgian and on his death she is left at the mercy of her uncle, Silas. The novel is full of a terrible sense of danger hanging over the girl (Maud) but it is not until the very end of the book that anything wicked actually happens. It is a highly symmetrical book, divided into two sections; Maud's life at Knowl (her home) and Barton Haugh (Silas's house). Roughly speaking, in Swedenborgian terms Barton Haugh is Hell and Austin (Maud's father) is the earthly existence of a soul whose real nature is revealed in the figure of Silas.

30. Ourania as a title given to Aphrodite was interpreted by one of the speakers in Plato's Symposium (180d-181) as referring to intellectual love (its opposite being Pande_{mus}, indiscriminate love). In fact it appears frequently as the mark of an Oriental goddess and was a cult title of Aphrodite in Cyprus, Cythera and Corinth.

31. "Lines composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798" 100-102

32. The whole of the speech from which the quotation is taken owes much in particular to Book Thirteen of The Prelude (1805ed.)

The notion that one must look beyond the outer forms of Nature in order to communicate properly with the Soul within it is also the main theme of "Lines composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey ... ":

" ... For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue ... " (88-93)

33. The origins of this notion are obviously Platonic (e.g. Phaedrus, Republic Books III, IV, V)
34. In Poems London 1898.
35. In the interests of realism Coleridge explains that the tusk was a present from an Ethiopian prince, along with other gifts (cf. Morris's explanation of the origins of the altar).
36. This poem was printed privately in Madras in 1883 by Higginbotham and Company. The only copy which I have been able to find exists in the library of the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine and was originally given by Ross to his mother.

Ross was born in 1857 in India. He is renowned as the discoverer of the mosquito cycle in malaria; the Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Medicine was founded in his honour in 1926 (it was united with the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine in 1933). Throughout his life he wrote poetry and novels and even considered attempting to make his living as a writer. He published his Memoirs in 1923.

An outline of Edgar or The New Pygmalion follows:

Act I, Scene 1 - opens with Edgar asleep on the sea shore, surrounded by Aphrodite, Eros, Ariel and Choruses of Spirits. Interlude follows - Jehovah, Choruses of Angels. Zeus is chained below. Chorus from the Infernal cries for mercy. Dialogue between Christ and Satan about the existence of death and evil in the world. Spirit of a man brought in to answer questions. Christ asks that he (Edgar, of course) be given his loved one. Interlude ends with Choruses singing God's praises. Rout of Faeries follows. Edgar awakes, speaks of the visions of beauty he has seen.

Scene 2 Court of Marquis of Amaralza. He announces a poetry competition. Two poets compete, then Amaralza reads a poem of his own. A sculptor shows his work and everyone has to leave for fresh air (the whole scene is a satire on artistic pretensions).

Scene 3 Edgar's studio. Edgar shows some statues to his assistant, Eustace, including one lowlier than any living woman. Eustace leaves and while Edgar is talking to the statue, it begins to move. Eustace returns and confirms she is alive.

Act II Scene 1 A lonely estuary by the sea. Edgar and Niobelle (the statue) are alone, talking. He is trying to instruct her.

Scene 2 A terrace of the Palace. Three courtiers are discussing the story of the statue. Julian and Clissa enter. Niobelle catches them kissing.

Scene 4 As Scene 2. Conversation between Clissa and Niobelle

about how to ensnare a man. Clissa warns Niobelle to leave "a certain man" (Julian) alone. She leaves and Edgar enters. He is unhappy about the way Niobelle has developed as a person.

Scene 6 A terrace over looking the Garden of the Palace. Julian has lost his dagger. A village dance is planned and takes place (Julian is now obviously flirting with Niobelle). There is to be a fancy-dress ball that night. Niobelle plans to go as Helen. Amaralza enters with an old villager. Clissa has killed herself with Julian's dagger and left him a note.

Act III Scene 1 Mountains with a distant storm. Various spirits enter and describe the terrible weather.

Scene 2 A terrace of the Palace. Julian enters, reads Clissa's letter and tears it in two. He throws it down and leaves. Edgar enters, delivers another speech decrying hypocrisy, opinion etc.

Scene 3 Dancing Hall in Palace. Edgar has decided to be merry to-night. Dances with a lady but gets the steps wrong and leaves.

Scene 4 As Scene 2, Act III. Enter Boron (Clissa's brother). He reads her letter and leaves. Niobelle is alone. Edgar enters and reproaches her; attacks love and the world; reproaches Niobelle for her lost innocence, her forsaking him. Eventually he leaves. Julian enters and leaves with Niobelle.

Scene 5 Garden of Palace. Julian enters with Niobelle. They declare their love for each other. Edgar and Eustace enter. Edgar sends Eustace with a false message to lure Julian to his studio. He persuades Niobelle to come too.

Scene 6 Edgar's studio. Edgar shows Niobelle the empty pedestal. He has locked the door but lets Julian in, then locks it again. He stabs Julian with his own sword in revenge for Julian's stealing-away of Niobelle. He forces Niobelle to ascend her pedestal and she becomes a statue again. Edgar then breaks up the statue with a mallet before rushing off, with Eustace in pursuit.

Scene 7 At foot of mountains. There is a storm. Eustace and Edgar are on horse-back.

Scene 8 Base of mountains. Edgar enters a torrent. Eustace cannot follow.

Scene 9 The mountain summit. Edgar and various spirits. Edgar makes an impassioned speech about climbing to God, then dies. Jehovah promises a time when he will make a world which will contain neither good nor evil. The poem ends with a full Chorus of Angels singing Hallelujah to Jehovah.

This resumé is by no means complete but should suffice to indicate the action of the play.

37. In the Complete Poetical Works of Robert Buchanan (2 vols.) London 1901
38. Buchanan published this notorious attack under the pseudonym of Thomas Maitland. In 1872 he expanded the article into a pamphlet "The Fleshly School of Poetry and Other Phenomena of the Day". Rossetti's reply was "The Stealthy School of Criticism", published in Athenaeum 2303 (16 December, 1871) 792-294. In fact the controversy was disastrous for Buchanan's literary career.

39. In Longman's Magazine January 1883.
 40. In Original Plays by W.S. Gilbert. First Series London 1876
 41. It is obviously impractical for her to be totally innocent:
cf. Shaw's treatment both in Pygmalion and Back to Methuselah.
The comedy lies in this selective innocence. For example, she can speak but says things she should not. She is ignorant of the meaning of simple words but capable of complex thought (e.g. she does not know the meaning of "soldier" yet replies to an explanation of it with the phrase "paid assassin"). For a discussion of this technique in Gilbert's and Shaw's work, see Martin Meisel Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theater (Oxford 1963) 420 f.
 42. In Pygmalion. The Bodley Head Collected Plays. London 1972 Vol. 4.
 43. In Back to Methuselah. The Bodley Head Collected Plays. London 1972. Vol 5.
 44. Heinrich Dörrie in Pygmalion Ein Impuls Ovids und seine Wirkungen bis in die Gegenwart (Opladen 1974) 60.
"Gewiss, Professor Higgins kennt offensichtlich die einschlägige Pygmalion-Literatur. Er weiss, dass er dem ungebildeten Blumenmädchen Bildung vermitteln muss, um einen Menschen aus ihr zu bilden. Aber erstens verwechselt er den Menschen (im Sinne Rousseaus und Immermanns) mit dem standesgemäss auftretenden Aristokraten (Eliza Doolittle soll ja Herzogin werden, ohne dass man's merkt). Und zweitens verwechselt der Professor Bildung mit guter Aussprache; er hält seine Aufgabe für erfüllt, wenn er dem Mädchen seinen abscheulichen Dialekt abgewöhnt, d.h. es so zu sprechen lehrt, wie es in der guten Gesellschaft, in der allein es lohnt, Mensch zu sein, üblich ist".
- Note also the similarity between the story of Eliza, the flower-girl, and the abductions of Persephone and Europa. In both cases the maidens were gathering flowers immediately before they were carried off.
45. The name Galatea is, of course, comparatively modern. It seems to have appeared first in 1770 in Rousseau's "Pygmalion" (see M. Reinhold "The Naming of Pygmalion's Animated Statue" C.J. 66 {1971 }316-19)
 46. Shaw's stage directions are always very detailed and explicit. Shaw was very interested in the whole Pre-Raphaelite movement and even subtitled his work Candida "a Pre-Raphaelite play".
 47. cf. Meisel 69
"The playwright must make 'reckless use of coincidences'; and his characters must be able to 'understand themselves and describe themselves much better than any real human being

ever does or can'.

Shaw offers Doolittle as an example of such a character and contrasts him with Higgins, a character so unaware of his own nature that he complains continually about the unreasonable views others take of him."

48. London 1881

49. The theme of metamorphosis is not confined to Pygmalion's story. His Mother (Woolner uses a capital letter) is also apparently in the business of creating a perfect female:

"No greatest painter by the Gods beloved,
Painting their deeds on their own Temple walls
Gave more devotion to the forms that grew
Day after day beneath his subtle hand,
Than she in fashioning her maidens' lives
Unto their fullest nature: ... "

50. Jenkyns 141 seems to ignore completely the second part of this work in his analysis. He sees the poem as "an allegory of the artist's predicament: his technique may be flawless, but where can he find the inspiration which will make his creatures 'live'?" While this is undoubtedly true of the Pygmalion-Ianthe story, it hardly seems applicable to the Pygmalion-Bacis episode.

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