Metamorphoses

Based on the Myths of Ovid
Written and originally directed by
Mary Zimmerman
Directed by Julia Rodriguez-Elliott

February 7–May 7, 2021

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All the best,

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Pictured: Carolyn Ratteray, Evan Lewis Smith, and Veralyn Jones, *Gem of the Ocean* 2019. PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ.

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CHARACTER MAP

COSMOGONY

Zeus
King of the gods.

Woman by the Water
Implores the gods to show her how humans came to be.

Scientist
Describes the chaos of the world's beginnings.

MIDAS

Bacchus
God of agriculture, wine, drama, and festivity. Grants Midas a wish.

Midas
A wealthy and greedy ruler. Offers to shelter Silenus.

Silenus
A lost traveler and friend to Bacchus.

His Daughter
Midas' playful daughter.

Three Laundresses
As they do laundry, they tell the story of Midas to pass the time.

ALCYONE AND CEYX

Aphrodite
Goddess of love and beauty. Enlists Iris and Sleep to help Alcyone and Ceyx reunite.

Iris
Goddess of the rainbow and messenger to the gods.

Sleep
Conjures an image of Ceyx that visits Alcyone in her sleep.

Alcyone
Daughter of Aeolus—god of the wind—and wife to Ceyx. Foresees a great danger in Ceyx's planned voyage.

Ceyx
Alcyone's husband. Embarks on a dangerous journey to a far-off oracle.

ERYSICHTHON

Ceres
Goddess of grain and agriculture. Curses Erysichthon with insatiable hunger after he cuts down one of her sacred trees.

Erysichthon
A skeptic of the gods. He cuts down a tree sacred to Ceres to use for its timber.

His Mother
Erysichthon's mother. Erysichthon sells her so that he may buy more food.

Hunger
A spirit who assists Ceres by attaching herself to Erysichthon.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Hades
King of the Underworld. Allows Eurydice to follow Orpheus back to the land of the living if Orpheus agrees to not look back for her until they are both out of the Underworld.

Persephone
Queen of the Underworld and Hades' wife. She spends seven months of the year in the Underworld with Hades and the rest of the year in the living world, where she is regarded as the goddess of spring.

Hermes
Messenger to the gods. He carries souls to the Underworld.

Orpheus
A musician and would-be husband to Eurydice. After Eurydice's death, he travels to the Underworld to attempt bring her back to the living world.

Eurydice
Orpheus' would-be wife. She was bitten by a venomous snake on the day of her wedding and died.

CHARACTER MAP

VERTUMNUS AND POMONA

Vertumnus
God of springtime.
He is intent on earning the love of Pomona.

Pomona
A wood nymph and gifted botanist.
Does not notice Vertumnus.

MYRRHA

Aphrodite
Goddess of love and beauty.
Curses Myrrha with a lust for her father, Cinyras.

Myrrha
Daughter of Cinyras. She angered Aphrodite by ignoring her many suitors.

Cinyras
Myrrha's father.

Nursemaid
Myrrha's confidant. Helps Myrrha devise a plan to act on her lust without being seen.

PHAETON

Apollo
God of light, music, and poetry.
He drives the sun through the sky every day.

Phaeton
Apollo's son. He is in therapy in part because of his strained relationship with his father.

Therapist
Phaeton's therapist.

EROS AND PSYCHE

Aphrodite
Goddess of love and beauty. Eros' mother. Jealous of Psyche's beauty, she sends Eros to kill Psyche.

Eros
God of love. Aphrodite's son and Psyche's husband. Falls in love with Psyche against the wishes of Aphrodite but forbids Psyche from seeing him.

Psyche
Eros' wife. Prohibited from seeing her husband, she worries that she has married a monster.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON

Zeus
King of the gods. Disguises himself as a beggar to test the kindness of humans.

Hermes
Zeus' son and messenger to the gods. With Zeus, he disguises himself as a beggar to test the kindness of humans.

Baucis
Philemon's wife. She welcomes the disguised Zeus and Hermes into her humble home.

Philemon
Baucis' husband. Ensures that Zeus and Hermes are comfortable as guests in his home.

SYNOPSIS

Between the years 2 C.E. and 8 C.E., the Roman poet Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses*, an epic poem. In this poem, Ovid retells 250 Greek and Roman myths over the course of 15 books. While Ovid's work is comprised of many different stories, every myth in the epic poem shares a common theme: transformation. Like Ovid's original work, Mary Zimmerman's theatrical adaptation of *Metamorphoses* is comprised of mythological stories told in episodic vignettes. The following stories are featured in Zimmerman's play:

Midas

Midas, an exorbitantly rich and selfish man, performs a rare good deed one day when he offers a lost traveler, who arrives in his court, shelter for the night. Because of this good deed, Bacchus, the Roman god of festivity, offers to grant Midas a gift of his choosing. With his judgement clouded by greed, Midas asks that everything he touch turn to gold. However, what begins as an exciting gift quickly transforms into a destructive curse.

Alcyone and Ceyx

Itching to get back out to sea, King Ceyx decides to embark on a journey to a far-off oracle against the advice of his wife, Alcyone, who fears that the voyage is too dangerous and that Ceyx will never return home. Alcyone's fears come to pass when Ceyx's ship is caught up in a whirlwind, and Ceyx perishes at sea. The gods take pity on Alcyone, who anxiously awaits her husband's return on the shoreline, and transform her and Ceyx's spirits into seabirds so that they might live out the rest of their lives together.

Erysichthon

Scornful of the gods, Erysichthon does not hold anything sacred, only looking for usefulness in all things. One day, Erysichthon wanders into a sacred grove and orders that a tree loved by the goddess Ceres be cut down and used as timber. In retribution for his disregard of the sacred tree, Ceres enlists the spirit Hunger to lodge herself in Erysichthon's belly. Erysichthon becomes insatiable and forgoes everything he cares about to quell his endless hunger—all to no avail.

Orpheus and Eurydice

After his bride, Eurydice, dies suddenly on their wedding day, Orpheus decides to descend into the Underworld to beg Hades to let Eurydice return to the world of the living. There, Hades is so moved by Orpheus' tale, that he agrees to let Eurydice return with Orpheus under one condition: as they travel back out through the Underworld to the world of the living, Orpheus must not look back to see if Eurydice is behind him. It is a test of trust that Orpheus ultimately fails, losing Eurydice forever.

Pomona and Vertumnus

Pomona, a wood nymph known for her gardening skills, hardly notices anything but the flowers and fields to which she tends. She is so engrossed in gardening she even ignores suitors. Vertumnus, the god of springtime, is in love with her and, in an effort to make Pomona take notice of him, he disguises himself in different costumes that allow him to be near her. Eventually, Vertumnus dresses as an old woman and, in an attempt to woo Pomona, recounts the story of Myrrha. As Vertumnus concludes his story, Pomona urges him to take off his disguise, revealing that she has seen through his guise and been paying attention to him.

Myrrha

Princess Myrrha cannot be bothered with love, ignoring Aphrodite, the goddess of love, by consistently turning a blind eye to suitors who have come to win her hand. Angered by Myrrha's insolence, Aphrodite curses Myrrha with a lust for her father, King Cinyras. Overcome with conflicting emotions, Myrrha confides in her nursemaid, who helps Myrrha act on her desire for her father without being discovered for who she is, insisting to Cinyras that he wear a blindfold during all encounters with her. Myrrha spends three nights with her father before he realizes what has happened. In the wake of the revelation and Cinyras' unbridled anger at the truth, the gods take pity on Myrrha, allowing her to disappear.

SYNOPSIS CONTINUED...

Phaeton

Phaeton, the spoiled son of Apollo, explains to his therapist how difficult it has been for him to grow up without having a relationship with his father. As his therapist listens, Phaeton shares about the time he decided to meet his father and accidentally set the world on fire after convincing Apollo to let him take a turn at leading the sun through the sky.

Eros and Psyche

Jealous of Psyche's great beauty, Aphrodite orders her son, Eros, to kill Psyche. Instead of killing Psyche, Eros falls in love with her, and the two get married. However, Eros forbids Psyche from ever seeing him. Because Eros will not allow Psyche to see him, Psyche fears the worst: that she has married a monster. Ultimately, Psyche decides to enter Eros' room with a candle to look upon his face. As she does so, a drop of wax from the candle falls on Eros as he sleeps and he wakes to see Psyche standing over him. In retribution for disobeying Eros, Aphrodite condemns Psyche to complete endlessly difficult tasks. Once Psyche completes the tasks assigned, Zeus allows the two to reunite and happily live together forever.

Baucis and Philemon

Interested in the true nature of humans, Zeus (the king of the gods) and Hermes (Zeus' son) disguise themselves as beggars and come down to earth. They go from door to door seeking food and shelter, only to be denied time and time again. Finally, the two knock on the door of a modest hut and brace themselves for yet another rejection. However, when Baucis and Philemon answer the door, they warmly welcome the disguised Zeus and Hermes into their home and give them a hearty meal. Impressed by the couple's kindness, Zeus and Hermes begin to transform the simple hut into an impressive house and agree to grant the couple one wish. Baucis and Philemon proclaim that they wish to die at the exact same moment so that they may not have to live without each other. ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **OVID**

Ovid, copper engraving c. 1600

Publius Ovidius Naso (better known as Ovid) was born in 43 B.C.E. to a prominent and wealthy family in Sulmo, a town situated in the rugged mountains of the Abruzzi region of Italy, about a hundred miles east of Rome. Because of his family's prominence, Ovid was able to travel to Rome to receive an education. It was in Rome that Ovid began to study rhetoric (the art of persuasion through speech and writing) under the best teachers of the day—a subject in which Ovid excelled. After spending some time in Rome, Ovid travelled to Greece to further his studies.

Despite Ovid's success in rhetoric in Rome and in Greece, Ovid's father intended for Ovid to utilize his education and his status to establish a career as a politician in Rome. Upon his return from Greece, Ovid entered Rome's political sphere. However, Ovid's time as a politician was brief. After serving in some minor judiciary positions, Ovid determined that life in politics did not suit him, so he abandoned public life and began to pursue poetry as a full-time occupation.

Ovid's poetry quickly earned him recognition from Rome's upper echelon of society. His first work, *Amores* (*The Loves*), was an immediate success. Much of Ovid's early work, including *Medicamina faciei* (*The Art of Beauty*), *Ars amatoria* (*The Art of Love*), and *Remedia amoris* (*Remedies for Love*), centered on love and intrigue. The tone of these works seems to stand in direct contrast to the moral reforms Emperor Augustus was implementing in Roman society at the time. Emperor Augustus, the self-proclaimed "Restorer of the Republic," spent much of his reign amending Roman laws to promote a moral code that centered on marital fidelity, chastity, and piety.

Not only did Ovid flout Augustus' new moral code through his writing, he also defied the code in his personal life. In fact, Seneca the Elder recalls that Ovid developed a reputation for being "emotional and impulsive by nature." However, this impulsive nature does not seem to have served Ovid well. In 8 C.E., Emperor Augustus banished Ovid to Tomis, a remote Greek City on the Black Sea coast in what is now part of Romania. While the exact cause of Ovid's exile is not known, Ovid himself is noted as saying that he was sent to Tomis for "a poem and a mistake." *Ars amatoria* is widely believed to be the poem in question, as Augustus was quite public about his disdain for it. Many scholars have hypothesized what the mistake might be and the exact nature of the mistake is still in large part a mystery.

Six years before he was exiled from Rome, Ovid began to write what is often considered to be his masterpiece: *Metamorphoses*. Comprised of 250 ancient Greek and Roman myths, *Metamorphoses* is an epic poem about mythological transformations. Ovid finished *Metamorphoses,* as well as *Fasti*, an epic poem centered on the religious calendar, in exile.

After finishing *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti,* Ovid spent the rest of his life trying to write his way back into the good graces of Emperor Augustus and other members of upper Roman society through a near constant stream of pleas for pardon—all to no avail. Ovid died in the year 17 C.E. in Tomis.

Scholars today classify Ovid as one of the three best Roman poets, grouping him with Virgil and Horace. His work falls between the years of the Golden and Silver Ages of literature in Rome. He continued the tradition of Greek epics in the style of Homer, and like many other classical artists, his work saw a resurgence of importance in the Renaissance, despite the fact that his work was removed from Roman public libraries at the time of his exile.

Ovid's work has remained in the public mind because of the unique perspective he offers on life at the time. In his work *Heroides*, he creates a series of letters from Greek heroines to their missing partners, sometimes chastising them and sometimes wishing they would return home. This work gave a voice and perspective to a group often overlooked and ignored in mythology. In *Metamorphoses*, he demystifies both well-known and commonplace myths. His perspectives on classical myths allow scholars to form a better idea of Roman literature at the time following the new Roman Empire, as well as the new rule of Emperor Augustus. ♦

Edited from:

https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ovid-Roman-poet ; https://dcc.dickinson.edu/ovid-amores/biographical-information ; https://www.jstor.org/stable/23062565?read-now=1&seq=5#page_scan_tab_contents ; https://www.ancient.eu/article/116/augustus-political-social--moral-reforms/

ABOUT THE ADAPTOR: **MARY ZIMMERMAN**

Photo by E. Jason Wambsgans, *Chicago Tribune*

Mary Zimmerman is a Tony Award®-winning director and playwright known for her theatrical adaptations of classical works of literature. She was born on August 23, 1960, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Both of Zimmerman's parents were professors, and Zimmerman spent a significant amount of time overseas as a child while her parents pursued their academic work. While in London, at the age of five, Zimmerman stumbled across an outdoor rehearsal for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As Zimmerman watched a run of a scene, she was struck by the rehearsal's joyous and fun atmosphere. This experience seeing actors and theatre artists at work first sparked Zimmerman's interest in theatre.

Zimmerman went on to attend Northwestern University, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in theatre, as well as Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in performance studies. She is a professor and the Jaharis Family Foundation Chair in Performance Studies at Northwestern University's School of Communication.

In the early 1990s, Zimmerman began adapting classical tales and works of literature for the stage. Her work has included theatrical adaptations of source material such as *The Thousand and One Nights, The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci, The Odyssey,* and *The Jungle Book*. In 1998, Zimmerman was named a recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship for her work.

Zimmerman is also a prolific director, often directing her own adaptions to much acclaim, having won more than 20 Joseph Jefferson Awards. She is an Ensemble Member at the Lookingglass Theatre Company and an Artistic Associate of the Goodman Theatre. In 2002, Zimmerman won a Tony Award® for Best Direction of a Play for her adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In 2015, Zimmerman discussed her process for staging an adaptation with *Los Angeles Times*. When she is working on a new adaptation, Zimmerman often begins rehearsals without a script. She is interested in shaping the text along with the actors and other theatre artists involved in the project.

"I write the text, bit by bit, the night before rehearsal [...] I'm very inspired by who's in the cast and the situation [of the world] at the time of our performance, the set we've come up with. There's a very vivid, lively, organic quality to the process. ... I love being present at the moment of discovery; I love figuring things out; I love the combustion of the idea in the room when it all falls together. ...We're growing up together in the text. It's being made by all of us." ♦

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http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-cacm-mary-zimmerman-quotes-20151129-htmlstory.html, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mary-Zimmerman, and http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-remarkable-maryzimmerman-20140518-story.html

HISTORY OF *METAMORPHOSES*: A TIMELINE

Since its initial publication in 8 C.E., Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has become a prominent source of inspiration for artists of all media. Below is a timeline that highlights important dates in Ovid's life, as well as important dates related to prominent works with roots in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

43 B.C.E. Publius Ovidius Naso (better known as Ovid) is born.

16 B.C.E. Ovid writes his first work, *Amores* (*The Loves*). It is an immediate success.

15 B.C.E. Ovid writes *Heroides*.

1 C.E. Ovid writes *Ars Amatoria*.

2 C.E. Ovid begins work on *Metamorphoses*, adapting 250 Greek and Roman myths into an epic poem.

8 C.E. Ovid is exiled to the remote Greek town of Tomis. The reasons for his exile are mysterious, although Ovid says he has been banished for a "poem and a mistake." Ovid completes *Metamorphoses*.

17 C.E. Ovid dies in exile in Tomis.

1480 William Caxton translates *Metamorphoses* into English for the first time. He uses a French translation of Ovid's work as the basis for his text and translates the work into prose.

1556-59 Italian painter, Titian, paints a series of paintings including *Diana and Actaeon*, *Diana and Callisto*, and *The Death of Actaeon* based off of tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

1567 Arthur Golding translates *Metamorphoses* into English. Golding's translation becomes the most influential early translation. This is the version Shakespeare consulted when borrowing phrases from *Metamorphoses* for his plays. Golding employed rhyming couplets in iambic heptameter in order to emulate the hexameter that Ovid used in Latin.

1594 A copy of *Metamorphoses* appears in *Titus Andronicus* by William Shakespeare. In the play, Lavina uses the book to communicate to Marcus and Titus.

1595 Pyramus and Thisbe, ill-fated lovers from Book IV of *Metamorphoses,* appear in William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

1610 William Shakespeare loosely bases Prospero's speech in Act V, Scene I of *The Tempest* off of the words of Medea in Book VII of *Metamorphoses*.

1667 John Milton publishes his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, which references *Metamorphoses* throughout.

1783 German composer, Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, composes *Sinfonien nach Ovids Metamorphosen*, six symphonies based on *Metamorphoses*.

1912 George Bernard Shaw writes *Pygmalion*, a play about a woman's transformation through the Victorian class structure. This play is inspired by the story of Pygmalion presented in Book X of *Metamorphoses*.

1956 *My Fair Lady* with book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Lowe, based on George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, premieres on Broadway, winning 6 Tony Awards®, including the Tony Award for Best Musical. It would later be turned into a film and get revived four more times on Broadway.

1959 *Black Orpheus*, a Brazilian film based on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth in *Metamorphoses,* wins the Palme D'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

1994 Michael Hoffmann and James Lasdun publish *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses*, a collection of contemporary takes on the tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

1996 Mary Zimmerman adapts Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into a stage play.

1997 Ted Hughes publishes *Tales from Ovid*, a translation of 24 of the tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

2002 Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* opens on Broadway and Mary Zimmerman wins the Tony Award for Best Direction for her work.

2019 *Hadestown* with book, music, and lyrics by Anaïs Mitchell, based on the Orpheus and Eurydice myth from Book X on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, premieres on Broadway, winning 8 Tony Awards, including the Tony Award for Best Musical.

ORAL STORYTELLING TRADITIONS AND **EPIC POETRY**

Before written language spread throughout the world, myths and epic stories were passed down from generation to generation through spoken word. Mythical stories were created in order to explain the phenomena of the natural world. Epic stories centered on a hero who has some connection to the gods and whose actions are important to history and humanity. It is thought that epic poems derived from episodic stories that were gradually unified into a singular narrative. Both myths and epics tell tales of gods and goddesses intervening in the trajectory of mortals' lives and help to establish a common cultural vocabulary. Often, storytellers in ancient Greece would travel from town to town to tell common tales, usually setting their stories to music. Eventually, myths and epics became woven into the cultural and collective conscious of ancient Greek society.

As written language began to develop, oral stories evolved into epic poetry. Written epic poetry has its roots in Mesopotamia, where in approximately 2100 B.C.E., the first written versions of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* began to appear. Around 800 B.C.E., epic poetry began to take shape in Greece. There, Homer is credited as the first Western epic poet for his work in setting down the stories of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in writing.

Epic poems are often written in elevated language and meter. While myths were typically used as explanations for otherwise mysterious natural occurrences, the focus of epic poetry tended to be a character's heroism. Epics typically open with an invocation of a Muse in which the author or narrator of the epic calls upon a goddess to inspire the story. Often, the poet opens the work by clearly stating the theme of the poem. Epic poems are known for their heroic characters, significant length, and use of long formal speeches given by main characters.

Like the tales detailed in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, and *The Odyssey*, the stories that comprise Ovid's *Metamorphoses* have their roots in an oral storytelling tradition. However, unlike those works, *Metamorphoses* deviates from the some of the common conventions of epic poetry. Like most epics, *Metamorphoses* begins with an invocation to the gods, is written in meter, and is

Virgil Reading the "Aeneid" to Augustus, Octavia, and Livia by Jean-Baptiste Wicar c.790/93

quite lengthy. However, unlike its epic predecessors, *Metamorphoses* centers on a singular theme as opposed to a singular hero. Nevertheless, Ovid's expertise in seamlessly weaving myths together in a chronological order creates a continuous narrative between the myths and sets the work definitively in the realm of epic poetry, despite *Metamorphoses*' unique tone and style.

Since the time of oral storytelling, epic poetry has endured. Some of the best-known epic poems, including Dante's *Divine Comedy,* Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, were written during the Renaissance and Reformation periods. Part of the reason for the endurance of epic stories has to do with the universality of the themes explored in the works. The universality of their themes gives epics the ability to be easily adapted into other mediums. Epics have remained important and relevant as their core stories have been adapted and filtered through the lens of opera, literature, visual art, and cinema. ♦

Edited from:

http://www.auburn.edu/~downejm/epicbasics.html and http://people.virginia.edu/~jdk3t/epicintrog/metstyle.htm

THE BACKDROP TO *METAMORPHOSES*: **ANCIENT GREECE AND ANCIENT ROME**

While Ovid was a Roman poet who lived and worked during the Roman Empire, he drew from Ancient Greek myths to create *Metamorphoses*. Because of the influence of Greek stories on Ovid's work, it is important to consider ancient Greek society as well as ancient Roman society when examining *Metamorphoses.*

Blick in Griechenlands Blüte by Wilhelm Ahlborn, based on Schinkel's original, c.1836

ANCIENT GREECE

The legacy of ancient Greek philosophy, politics, and art is tremendous. Many contemporary Western democratic systems of government, language, and schools of philosophical thought are rooted in ancient Greek tradition.

We can think of ancient Greek civilization as being broken up into a number of specific time periods, each characterized by different philosophical, political, and artistic thought. Two early Greek civilizations were those of Mycenae and Minos. These civilizations existed until about 1200 B.C.E. and 1400 B.C.E., respectively. This was the time the great mythological warriors, such as Jason, Agamemnon, Achilles, and Odysseus are said to have lived. Both of these civilizations fell—perhaps in part because of the drain of the Trojan War and civil wars that followed.

Greece then entered a "Dark Age," during which many former settlements were abandoned and artistic production was limited. This period lasted from about 1200 B.C.E. until 800 B.C.E. The Archaic period in Greek society lasted from approximately 800 to 500 B.C.E. This period saw great advances in art, poetry, and technology, but most notably, it saw the rise of Greek city-states. City-states—called *poleis* in Greek—were communities that developed their own forms of government, imposed their own taxes, and raised their own armies.

The Classical Period, the golden age for Athens, followed. The Acropolis was built, a democratic system of government was established, philosophical thinkers—such as Plato—began to work, and playwrights—such as Sophocles—began to write. This age lasted from about 480 B.C.E. to 330 B.C.E. Alexander the Great rose to power in the late Classical Period and began his quest to expand the civilization. He conquered Persia, invaded Egypt, and made territorial gains in Asia Minor. This was the start of the Hellenistic Age. As Alexander continued to expand his territory, he also spread Grecian and Hellenistic values to new territories. The Hellenistic Age continued until Romans began to take hold of Greek lands. By 31 B.C.E., Greece was part of the Roman Empire.

Ruínas de Roma Antiga by Giovanni Paolo Panini, c. 1725

ANCIENT ROME

According to legend, Ancient Rome was founded by two brothers (and demigods), Romulus and Remus, in 753 B.C.E. While that myth has endured, it is most likely that Rome was founded as a trading center because of its strategic location on the banks of the Tiber River, once known as the *Rumon*.

From the start, Romans exhibited a great talent for borrowing skills and cultures from other civilizations and improving upon them. In the years following its founding, Rome borrowed heavily from Greek culture, civilization, religion, and architecture as models on which to build their own culture, religion, and architectural styles.

As a kingdom, Rome grew rapidly from a trading

THE BACKDROP TO *METAMORPHOSES*: **ANCIENT GREECE AND ANCIENT ROME** CONTINUED...

center to a prosperous city from 700 B.C.E. to 509 B.C.E., when Tarquin the proud—the last Roman king—was overthrown by his rival, Lucius Junius Brutus, who established the Roman Republic. This period, which lasted until 27 C.E., saw a massive expansion of Roman territory, power, and prestige. However, it also saw the solidification of a divided class structure, the advancement of corruption in politics, and the expansion of reliance on foreign slave labor. The fact that the wealthy elite (called the patricians) became increasingly rich at the expense of the working class (called the plebeians) created serious tension in Roman society.

As a result of the massive disparities between social classes, in 2 C.E., a movement began for a massive political reform. This is the political, cultural, and historical landscape from which Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses*. ♦

Edited from:

https://www.ancient.eu/greece/ and https://www.ancient.eu/Rome/

GODS, MONSTERS, AND MEN IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

"Myths are the earliest forms of science [...] It has been said that the myth is a public dream, dreams are private myths."

—Therapist, *Metamorphoses*

The interaction between gods, monsters, and men is characteristic of mythic and epic stories. Often, at least one god or goddess follows the hero of the epic to ensure his safe journey. While Ovid's *Metamorphoses* does not follow a singular hero on a specific journey, his stories are full of meddling gods and menacing monsters. These monsters and gods challenge the various mortals, testing their will, strength, leadership, loyalty, and morality. In this sense, encounters with monsters and gods provide the mortal characters with opportunities for great growth as much as they present opportunities for peril.

The Birth of Venus by Alexandre Cabanel c. 1863

The legends of these encounters form the basis of Greek mythology. The word "myth" comes from the Greek word *mythos* which translates to "word," or (perhaps more importantly) "story." A myth is a story that can be thought of as having two primary characteristics: significance and staying power. Significance here means that the subject matter for the myth is something important, about how the world works, or how the world came to be as it is. Staying power in this context means that stories have survived through centuries (and sometimes millennia). A myth's staying power is a testament to the deep meaning or functional importance of the story it tells. Scholar Joseph Campbell noted that mythology is significant because it is "ultimately and always the vehicle through which the individual finds a sense of identity and place in the world."

In 1955, the poet and scholar Robert Graves wrote, "Myth has two main functions. The first is to answer the sort of awkward questions that children ask, such as 'Who made the world? How will it end? Who was the first man? Where do souls go after death?'... The second function of myth is to justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs." Mythical gods and monsters played a significant role in both functions. The gods often create or manipulate the social structures of the humans, and monsters often uphold those structures or uphold natural phenomena.

Each god and monster in Greek mythology has authority over specific aspects of life: Aphrodite's domain is love and beauty, Aeolus controls the wind, and Ceres is an expert in all things related to agriculture and grain. While every divine being in Greek mythology has a niche, it is common for gods and monsters to clash over the exact nature and extent of their individual powers. The only gods with indisputable powers are the Fates—three goddesses who control the destinies of all mortals.

Gods in Greek mythology resemble humankind in that they are easily swayed by such forces as pride, lust, love, jealousy, anger, and revenge. They are not necessarily omniscient and often make mistakes. Because the gods are vulnerable to the same vices and weaknesses as humans, they are not perfect in their judgements or actions. In fact, their distinctly human-like behavior tends to get them into tricky situations throughout the mythological canon. ♦

Edited from:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeX6CX5LEj0&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNCG9Vq7vdvJytS-F-xGi7_&t=0s

ONE THING AT A TIME: **EPISODIC STORY STRUCTURE**

Both Ovid's original *Metamorphoses* and Mary Zimmerman's play follow an episodic narrative structure. Essentially, the entire work is comprised of individual story units each with its own beginning, middle, and end. These units (sometimes called vignettes and sometimes called episodes) work together to form an overarching narrative. It is easy to think of these units as individual pieces of a larger narrative puzzle.

Epic poetry and theatre are not the only places where we see episodic story structures at play in media history. For example, during the Victorian Era, it was common for authors to release their novels chapter by chapter in local papers, and when radio became a common household entity, serialized radio programming became quite popular. Today, episodic storytelling can be found across all forms of media, from television series, to podcasts, and even film franchises.

In an episodic story, different narrative devices can be used to link the individual episodes to each other. Plot is the most common device used, such that each new episode of a work advances the overall plot the previous episode established. This type of link is seen frequently in film series such as *Star Wars*, while character is often an episodic link in television series. Many television series follow the same characters from episode to episode, even if the plots of the episodes do not necessarily build off of each other. Such is the case for a series like *The Office* or *Parks and Recreation*. Occasionally, theme acts as the link between episodic units. This type of link can be seen frequently in podcast series like *Revisionist History,* in which Malcolm Gladwell investigates one specific and often misunderstood moment in history in each of his episodes.

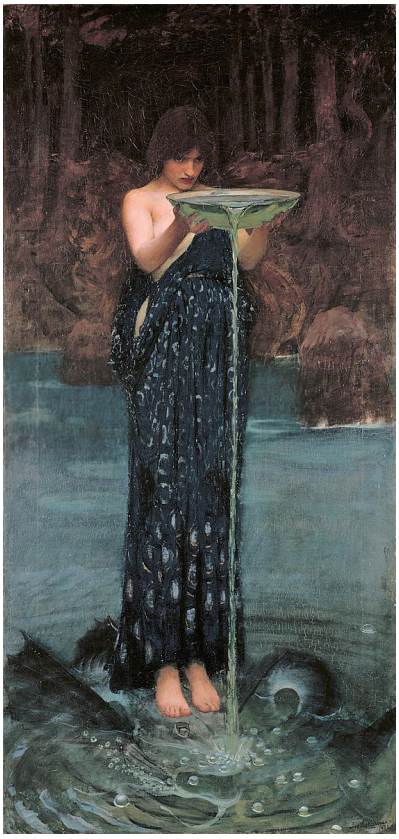
In the case of *Metamorphoses,* each of the episodes is united by a common theme: transformation. In Zimmerman's adaptation, each vignette offers a particular examination of or commentary on the effects of change. As is the case with most episodic stories, the sum of the vignettes is greater than its component parts. That is, there is more to be gleaned about change from *Metamorphoses* as a whole than there is by only considering the individual episodes that comprise the work. In placing the theme of transformation at the center of each episode, Ovid and Zimmerman's works allow for a more complete and nuanced examination of change. ♦

Orpheus and Eurydice by Marcantonio Raimondi, c. 1500–1506

WATER: **AN ELEMENT OF CHANGE**

"Water does not resist. Water flows. When you plunge your hand into it, all you feel is a caress. Water is not a solid wall, it will not stop you. But water always goes where it wants to go, and nothing in the end can stand against it."

—Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*



Circe Invidiosa by John William Waterhouse, c. 1892

Scientists look for several things when determining whether an environment has the capacity to support and sustain life. Of the different necessary qualifications, water is the most important. No known life form can survive without it. Life is made from water. Cities are built around water sources, such as Cairo around the Nile, London around the Thames, and New York around the Hudson. Water provides a source of power, an opportunity to trade, and the promise of a sustained source of life. However, along with the promise of the potential for life and sustenance, water also remains indomitably inconstant and unrelentingly destructive. Water gives as well as takes.

Water has long been associated with change. On a physical level, water rolls through waves on the ocean; it ebbs and flows in tides along shores; it freezes, melts, and evaporates; it flows; it cleans; it transports; and it takes the shape of its container. Symbolically, water is a moral cleanser and purifier: a tool used to rid a person of their wrongdoings or cleanse a person's soul, providing an element of rejuvenation and renewal.

WATER IN METAMORPHOSES

Throughout *Metamorphoses*, water is used as a literal agent of change or transformation. In the Midas myth, after he realizes his golden touch is more of a curse than a gift, Midas sets out on a journey to find a special pool of water in which he hopes to literally wash his hands of the destruction his golden touch has inflicted. It is a pool that Midas hopes will transform him and his world back to the way they were before he was ever endowed with the gift of a golden touch. In the Alcyone and Ceyx myth, it is a storm at sea that leads to Ceyx's death, and it is at sea where Alcyone and Ceyx choose to live once they have transformed into seabirds. In Greek mythology, water is used to transport souls from life to death as those recently departed float down to the Underworld on the River Styx. It is this body of water that Orpheus follows as he descends into the Underworld to retrieve Eurydice.

Even when water does not have a direct impact on the plot of a myth, water and its transformative properties are inherently woven into the overarching narrative of Mary Zimmerman's play. In her script, Zimmerman outlines that the essential centerpiece for the set of *Metamorphoses* is a pool of varying depth. The pool setting of *Metamorphoses* highlights the power of change and transformation on multiple levels. On one level, the pool set serves as various locations in which the myths in the play take place, morphing from one location to another fluidly. On a second level, this versatility of the set further underscores the physical and emotional changes characters undergo throughout the play. Characters routinely enter the pool as one being and exit the pool entirely transformed. ♦

THEMES

TRANSFORMATION

All of the myths in *Metamorphoses* are intrinsically linked to each other through their shared exploration of transformation. While the exact nature and type of change explored differs from myth to myth, each vignette examines the causes and effects of an individual's transformation from one state of being to another.

Some of the changes characters undergo are physical. Midas is granted an ability to change all that he touches into gold; Alcyone and Ceyx transform into seabirds; and Baucis and Philemon transform into trees. These physical transformations are all accomplished with the assistance of a god or goddess and physically manifest core qualities of those who are transformed. Midas' physical transformation is a physical extension of his greed. Alcyone and Ceyx's change appeals to Ceyx's inherent wanderlust and Alcyone's hereditary connection to the sea. The transformation of Baucis and Philemon highlights the strength of their bond.

These physical transformations also emphasize the gods' capacity for generosity. In Erysichthon's myth, after Erysichthon sells his mother off to a buyer, Poseidon rescues Erysichthon's mother by transforming her into a child:

> "From the briny deep, Poseidon heard her prayer, pulled her into the water, and changed her back into the little girl who used to play along his shores. The salty water licked the years away, until she emerged: the one who gave him praise in childhood, shouting as she ran among the waves. The kind of sweet, unbidden praise the gods adore and do not forget."
> —Narrator, Erysichthon myth

Other transformations are psychological. Orpheus' hope of a future with Eurydice transforms into grief. Myrrha is struck with an unwanted lust. Psyche's affection for Eros morphs into uncertainty. While the physical transformations other characters experience tend to facilitate a physical extension of a character's underlying principles, these psychological transformations often exploit a character's fundamental insecurities or perceived faults. Orpheus, who fears loneliness and betrayal, becomes the lonely betrayer when he turns to look at Eurydice. Myrrha, who refuses love at every turn, becomes consumed by a forbidden lust. Psyche, fearing she has made a mistake in marrying Eros, lets her doubt eclipse her love for her husband.

Regardless of the nature of the transformation explored—physical or psychological—at least one character in each myth in *Metamorphoses* experiences a drastic change—positive or negative—that alters the trajectory of their life and must learn to cope with that change.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Throughout the myths in *Metamorphoses*, characters' will to find, give, and receive love in the face of an obstacle drives much of the underlying narrative action. As much as it is an exploration of transformation, *Metamorphoses* is also an examination of the power and limits of love.

In Baucis and Philemon, the concept of love is painted as a force that defies the limits of mortality. When Zeus and Hermes agree to grant Baucis and Philemon one wish, the couple spends no time deliberating what they would want most: when the time comes, to die at the same moment so that neither one would have to live without the other or without love. However, when the couple comes to the end of their lives, instead of dying together, they are transformed into trees together:

> **Zeus:**
> And Baucis noticed her husband was beginning to put forth leaves, and he saw that she, too, was producing leaves and bark. They were turning into trees. They stood there, held each other, and called, before the bark closed over their mouths.
>
> **Baucis and Philemon:**
> Farewell.
>
> **Narrator:**
> Walking down the street at night, when you're all alone, you can still hear, stirring in the intermingled branches of the trees above, the ardent prayer of Baucis and Philemon. They whisper:
>
> **All Company:**
> Let me die the moment my love dies.
>
> **Narrator:**
> They whisper:
>
> **All Company:**
> Let me not outlive my own capacity to love.
>
> **Narrator:**
> They whisper:

THEMES CONTINUED...

All Company:
Let me die still loving, and so, never die.

Trees are strong and resilient with root systems as large or larger than their growth above the surface of the earth. They endure through wind, storms, and the passage of time (in fact, some trees can have a lifespan of up to 5,000 years!). Trees are formidable beings. The fact that Baucis and Philemon transform into trees emphasizes the strength, endurance, depth, and absolute power of the love the two have for each other.

Love even has sway in the Underworld. In the Orpheus and Eurydice myth, Orpheus appeals to love's power as he implores Hades—the King of the Underworld—to let Eurydice return to the land of the living:

Orpheus:
I don't know what power love has down here, but I have heard that he has some, for he brought you two together.

If that is true—that passion moved you once—then listen to me:

I've tried to master this grief and I can't.
I understand we all come here in the end.
My bride Eurydice will soon enough be your citizen in the ripeness of her years. I am asking for a loan, not a gift. If you deny me, one thing is certain: I want you to keep me here as well.

Narrator:
As Orpheus spoke, the pale phantoms began to weep. Tantalus was no longer thirsty, and Sisyphus sat on his rock to listen.

The fact that Tantalus (who has been sentenced to forever feel thirsty and hungry) and Sisyphus (who is doomed to roll a boulder up a hill for all of eternity) are able to respond in such a way to Orpheus' plea to Hades emphasizes love's power to alter fate. Orpheus' love for Eurydice even moves Hades such that Hades gives Orpheus and Eurydice a conditional opportunity to return to the living world together.

TRUTH AND DISGUISE

In some of the myths in *Metamorphoses*, characters don physical disguises when interacting with others. These characters utilize their physical disguises to get to the heart of a greater truth.

In the Pomona and Vertumnus myth, Vertumnus struggles to get Pomona's attention as himself, so he resorts to physical disguise to spend time near her each day. He disguises himself as everything from a farmhand to a fisherman to an old woman so that he may pretend to have a reason to be in Pomona's vicinity while she tends to her fields and gardens.

However, as she reveals at the end of the myth, Pomona has not bought Vertumnus' disguises at all. In fact, as he is dressed as an old woman, Pomona eventually asks Vertumnus to remove his disguise. When Vertumnus does so, he has a revelation:

> "When at last the god revealed himself just as he was, much to his surprise, he had no need of words. Little Pomona was happy with what she saw, unadorned and undisguised."
>
> —Narrator, Vertumnus and Pomona myth

The fact that Pomona sees through Vertumnus' costume—and has seen through his other disguises—underscores that the connection between Vertumnus and Pomona is true and indicates that it has been true for some time. Vertumnus' use of costumes as a crutch leads to a great realization: that he is everything he needs to be without a disguise.

Zeus and Hermes also utilize physical disguises in the Baucis and Philemon myth as they set out on a journey to understand the true nature of humans. Dressed as beggars, they go door-to-door asking everyone they meet for food and shelter. Because they do not recognize the beggars as gods, humans refuse to assist Zeus and Hermes time and time again—until Zeus and Hermes meet Baucis and Philemon. Without their disguises, Zeus and Hermes would not have discovered that more often than not, humans are not willing to blindly assist each other. Even further, without their disguises, the gods would not have seen the authenticity of the kindness Baucis and Philemon show them.

BLINDNESS AND SIGHT

Some myths in *Metamorphoses* explore the complex relationship between blindness and sight and what occurs when light (both physical and metaphorical) is cast upon a subject.

In the Myrrha myth, physical blindness is equated to bliss while sight is equated to realization. Because Cinyras is blindfolded during all of his encounters with Myrrha, he is unaware of the atrocity of the act he is committing. It is only when he removes

THEMES CONTINUED...

his blindfold that he realizes the dreadfulness of his actions.

Both the Orpheus and Eurydice myth and the Psyche and Eros myth explore blindness as a form of trust and sight as a form of betrayal. Hades charges Orpheus to blindly trust that Eurydice is following him as he makes his way out of the Underworld, and Eros commands that Psyche blindly trust that she has not married a monster. Both Orpheus and Psyche fail their tests of trust: Orpheus turns to see if Eurydice is following him, and Psyche brings a candle to Eros' room to see his face. Because of their respective failures, Orpheus and Psyche both pay penance for betraying their partners.

In Midas' story, blindness symbolizes ignorance. Despite his great material wealth and influence, Midas is blind to the preciousness of his relationship with his daughter. Throughout the myth, he repeatedly ignores and shuts down his daughter. It is only when he inadvertently turns his daughter to gold that Midas begins to understand the value of their relationship, which he hopes to restore by reversing his golden touch. Sight in this myth is associated with paradise. Silenus describes the paradise he has visited to Midas:

> "King, I tell ya, it's like a dream, a dream. I. Am. Telling. You. That in this place the people... they see each other. And in this place they live without desire of any kind and so time? There is no time—just the blue sky above and the pretty moon at night and they got meadows under their feet with the yellow flowers."
>
> —Silenus, Midas myth

The fact that people see and understand each other in this paradise highlights the importance and power of sight. ♦

Eros and Psyche by Niccolò dell' Abbate c.1512, public domain.

A BIG SPLASH: A CONVERSATION WITH A NOISE WITHIN'S PRODUCTION TEAM ABOUT THE POOL

All three of A Noise Within's Spring 2021 productions are utilizing an onstage pool as the centerpiece to their sets. Sam Sintef, A Noise Within's Production Manager and Resident Artist, and Catherine Lee, A Noise Within's Technical Assistant, discuss the thematic and practical functions of this ambitious set design.

What history does A Noise Within have with using the same set for multiple productions?

Sam Sintef: A Noise Within is no stranger to producing plays that connect thematically with overlapping design concepts. 2015's *The Threepenny Opera* and *Julius* Caesar had the same backdrop constructed of industrial scaffolding. In 2017, *King Lear* and *Man of La* Mancha shared the same curved wall that was 24 ft tall and 54 ft wide. The third attempt at unifying a repertory season within a single scenic design is the most ambitious yet. The idea to have this season based around water started with Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*. Water is an integral aspect of *Metamorphoses*, and it would be nearly impossible to produce it without having a pool. Water informs the physical action of the play and reinforces the themes of transformation and rebirth. These themes are echoed in *An Iliad* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* so it made poetic sense to visually unify all three productions with an interchangeable scenic design.

How is the pool utilized from production to production?

Sam Sintef: Water, the most protean of the elements, already lends itself to be able to undergo transformations. It can present itself as a solid, liquid or gas. Onstage it transforms depending on which production is playing. It can be the River Styx in *Metamorphoses*, a stream in the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* or the shoreline of Troy in *An Iliad*. The pool offers new possibilities for staging and allows the actors to tap into a different kind of vulnerability. Actors are able to move in ways that would not be possible on dry land. They can float in the water, fall into the water, and of course swim. The water becomes a scene partner and is another obstacle a character must overcome to achieve their objective.

What kind of research did you do in preparation to build the set?

Cathy: Once we got the announcement of what ANW was doing for the spring—that we are building a pool on stage—we knew there was a lot of research to do. There are a lot of factors that we need to consider about a pool on stage, the main one being water. How do we contain the water, onstage and backstage, so that nothing gets damaged? In the house, we have the AC going, so how do we make sure the water is comfortable for the actors to be in? How do we keep the water sanitary?

Fortunately, there have been several theatres who have done the daunting task of making a pool on stage. We were able to get advice from them, and we watched some of their online videos of how they did it. We also did our own research; we looked into how hot tubs function, what kind of pool equipment exists on the market, and what kind of math we need to do.

What are some of the technical considerations of this set?

Sam Sintef: From a technical standpoint, there are many factors to consider with having a pool onstage. A cubic square foot of water weighs roughly 62 lbs, so when installing the pool, it is imperative to make sure the stage is properly reinforced to take the additional weight. The frame is insulated with foam to help retain heat and the pool securely covered with pond liners to minimize leakage. The water is heated to approximately 99 degrees before every performance and is filtered to keep sanitary. Since the pool is being used for 3-4 months, we need to empty it for cleaning and re-fill it every few weeks. There are "heating stations" backstage so the actors can dry off in-between scenes, and the floor is covered with mats, so no one slips. The pool also informed how the other departments approached their designs. Costumes needed to test various fabrics to determine which can endure the cleaning chemicals used in the water. Lighting and sound had to coordinate with scenic to make sure their equipment was placed in water-safe areas. Each Stage Management team was required to be trained on pre-show and post-show procedures. Producing a single show with a pool is exceptional, but producing three productions with a pool creates an unparalleled theatrical experience.

PRE-SHOW PREPARATION: **RESEARCH**

Purpose:
These research prompts will help students develop an understanding of the social, historical, cultural, and mythological context of Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*.

Prepare:
To prepare for seeing *Metamorphoses*, have students break into small groups and research the following topics, either as groups or individually. When they are finished, have students present their findings to the class.

The Roman Republic

- The start of the period
- Emperor Augustus
- Class structure
- Government structure
- Major writers of the time

Greek and Roman Mythological Figures:

- Zeus
- Aphrodite
- Eros
- Bacchus
- Hades
- Hermes
- Apollo
- Ceres
- Aeolus

Settings in Greek and Roman Mythology:

- The Underworld
- Mount Olympus

Epic Poetry:

- *The Epic of Gilgamesh*
- Homer: *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
- Virgil: *The Aeneid*

Ovid:

- His life
- His work
- His exile

Mary Zimmerman:

- Her childhood
- Her career
- Her recent works

PRE-SHOW PREPARATION: **ACTIVITIES**

Purpose:
These activities will prompt students to think critically about the themes in *Metamorphoses*.

PLAN AN ADAPTATION

In this activity, students will have the opportunity to develop a well-thought-out plan for how they might adapt a myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into a narrative in a new medium.

- Have students read any of the following myths:
  - Midas (Book XI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)
  - Orpheus and Eurydice (Book X of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)
  - Baucis and Philemon (Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)
- Facilitate a class-wide discussion about the core themes of the myth and list the themes discussed for all students to see.
- Have students break into small groups to discuss where they have seen themes and characters similar to those in the myth in other novels, news stories, films, music, paintings, etc.
- In groups, ask students to devise a plan of how they would adapt the myth into a different artistic medium (a play, a film, a comic book, a graphic novel, a song, a television series, a web series, a choose-your-own adventure book, etc.). The adaptation could involve transposing the setting of the myth from ancient Greece to another time period/location.
- When ready, have each group present how they would plan to adapt the myth to the rest of the class. Presentations might include PowerPoints, costume sketches, set models, or vision boards.
- After the presentations, open up a class-wide conversation about what new light would be shed on the core themes and characters from Ovid's myth in each adaptation proposed.

CREATE-A-WORLD

In this activity, students will have the opportunity to use evidence found either in Mary Zimmerman's play script or Ovid's epic poem to explore mythological settings through creative writing and visual design.

- Have students read either Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.
- Facilitate a class-wide discussion about the themes, elements, archetypes, and tropes found in the myths, as well as those typically found in works of Greek and Roman mythology. List these elements in a place for all students to see.
- Break students into small groups and ask each group to map out the world in which all of these myths take place. Instruct them to consider the elements of mythology discussed and their knowledge of mythological stories as well as the following questions when imagining their new world:
  - What is the size of the world?
  - What is the climate like?
  - What is the terrain like?
  - What kinds of creatures inhabit this world with humankind?
  - What kinds of monsters inhabit the world, and where do they live?
- Have the students in each group sketch what their world would look like.
- Using their new world as a setting, each student will write the inner monologue of an outside visitor to the world on the day the visitor arrives. What does that visitor see? What do they smell, hear, taste, or touch? What discoveries does the visitor make? What questions does the visitor have?
- Let students share their worlds and their monologues with the rest of the class.
- Discussion: What was this activity like? What did you consider when you were creating your world? What discoveries did your visitor make?

PRE-SHOW PREPARATION: **ACTIVITIES** CONTINUED...

TRANSFORMATION PRE-WRITE

In this activity, students will have the opportunity to define what transformation means to them.

- Ask students to think about what qualities they associate with the word "transformation."
- Allow students to call out those qualities and begin to list them so that students can see them—perhaps on the board.
- After the list is sizeable, ask each student to consider all of the qualities in the list to create their own definition of transformation.
- Have students write their definitions of transformation and examine the role transformation has played in their lives.
- Allow students to share their definitions and examples of transformation.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. In *Metamorphoses*, Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, appears in multiple myths. However, the role she plays differs from tale to tale. In a thesis-driven essay, characterize Aphrodite. Use evidence from Mary Zimmerman or Ovid's text to support your claim.

2. Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* takes place in an onstage pool. In a well-developed essay, analyze the role this set plays in the overarching narrative.

3. Throughout *Metamorphoses*, some characters experience physical transformations—such as when Alycone and Ceyx transform into seabirds—while others experience internal transformations—such as when Psyche sees Eros for the first time. Compare and contrast the role of physical transformation and internal transformation in *Metamorphoses*. Support your claim with evidence from Mary Zimmerman or Ovid's text.

Read the following passage from Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*:

Scientist:
Before there was water and dry land, or even heaven and earth,
nature was all the same: what we call "chaos,"
with neither sun to shed its light nor moon to wax
and wane, nor earth hung in its atmosphere of air.
If there was land and sea, there was no discernible shoreline,
no way to walk on the one, or swim or sail in the other.
There was neither reason nor order, until at last, a god sparked,
glowed, then shone like a beam of light to define earth
and the heavens and separate water from hard ground.

Woman:
Once these distinctions were made and matter began to behave,
the sky displayed its array of stars in their constellation—
a twinkling template of order. The sea upon which they shone
quickened with fish, and the woods and meadows with game,
and the air with twittering birds. Each order of creature
settling into itself.

To what extent do order and chaos dictate the action of *Metamorphoses*?
Support your claim with textual evidence.

ADDITIONAL **RESOURCES**

EPIC POEMS:

Metamorphoses by Ovid. Translated by Ian Johnston. Published by Richer Resources Publications in 2012.

The Aeneid by Virgil. Translated by David Ferry. Published by University of Chicago Press in 2017.

BOOKS:

The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell et al. Published by Turtleback Books in 2012.

Myth: A Handbook by William Doty. Published by University of Alabama Press in 2007.

After Ovid: New Metamorphoses by Michael Hofmann and James Lasdun. Published by Noonday Press in 1997.

Tales from Ovid by Ted Hughes. Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2000.

PLAYS:

Eurydice by Sara Ruhl. Published by Samuel French in 2008.

Pygmalion by George Bernard Shaw. Published by Dover Thrift Editions in 1994.

MUSICALS:

Hadestown Music, Lyrics, and Book by Anaïs Mitchell. 2019.

My Fair Lady Book and Lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, Music by Frederick Lowe. 1956.

ARTICLES:

Goold, G. P. "The Cause of Ovid's Exile." *Illinois Classical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1983, pp. 94–107. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23062565. Accessed 20 May 2020.

Smith-Laing, Tim. "Ovid's Metamorphoses Is the Ultimate Sourcebook for Artists." *Apollo Magazine*, 2017, www.apollo-magazine.com/ovids-metamorphoses-is-the-ultimate-sourcebook-for-artists/.

FILM AND TELEVISION:

My Fair Lady directed by George Cukor (1964)

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Adaptation:
https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/ovids-metamorphoses

Crash Course World Mythology: What is Myth?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeX6CX5LEj0&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNCG9Vq7vdvJytS-F-xGi7_&t=0s

Crash Course World Mythology: Theories of Myth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blFaiB5kj6I&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNCG9Vq7vdvJytS-F-xGi7_&t=0s

ABOUT THEATRE ARTS: **KEY THEATRICAL TERMS**

Today, movies and television take audiences away from what was once the number one form of amusement: going to the theatre. But attending a live theatrical performance is still one of the most thrilling and active forms of entertainment.

In a theatre, observers are catapulted into the action, especially at an intimate venue like A Noise Within, whose thrust stage reaches out into the audience and whose actors can see, hear, and feel the response of the crowd.

Although playhouses in the past could sometimes be rowdy, participating in the performance by giving respect and attention to the actors is the most appropriate behavior at a theatrical performance today. Shouting out (or even whispering) can be heard throughout the auditorium, as can rustling paper or ringing phones.

After this A Noise Within performance, you will have the opportunity to discuss the play's content and style with the performing artists and directors. You may wish to remind students to observe the performance carefully or to compile questions ahead of time so they are prepared to participate in the discussion.

blocking: The instructions a director gives actors that tell them how and where to move in relation to each other or to the set in a particular scene.

character: The personality or part portrayed by an actor on stage.

conflict: The opposition of people or forces which causes the play's rising action.

dramatic irony: A dramatic technique used by a writer in which a character is unaware of something the audience knows.

genre: Literally, "kind" or "type." In literary terms, genre refers to the main types of literary form, principally comedy and tragedy. It can also refer to forms that are more specific to a given historical era, such as the revenge tragedy, or to more specific sub-genres of tragedy and comedy such as the comedy of manners, farce or social drama.

motivation: The situation or mood which initiates an action. Actors often look for their "motivation" when they try to dissect how a character thinks or acts.

props: Items carried on stage by an actor to represent objects mentioned in or implied by the script. Sometimes the props are actual, sometimes they are manufactured in the theatre shop.

proscenium stage: There is usually a front curtain on a proscenium stage. The audience views the play from the front through a "frame" called the proscenium arch. In this scenario, all audience members have the same view of the actors.

set: The physical world created on stage in which the action of the play takes place.

setting: The environment in which a play takes place. It may include the historical period as well as the physical space.

stage areas: The stage is divided into areas to help the director to note where action will take place. Upstage is the area furthest from the audience. Downstage is the area closest to the audience. Center stage defines the middle of the playing space. Stage left is the actor's left as they face the audience. Stage right is the actor's right as they face the audience.

theme: The overarching message or main idea of a literary or dramatic work. A recurring idea in a play or story.

thrust stage: A stage that juts out into the audience seating area so that patrons are seated on three sides. In this scenario, audience members see the play from varying viewpoints. A Noise Within features a thrust stage.

ABOUT **A NOISE WITHIN**

A NOISE WITHIN produces classic theatre as an essential means to enrich our community by embracing universal human experiences, expanding personal awareness, and challenging individual perspectives. Our company of resident and guest artists performing in rotating repertory immerses student and general audiences in timeless, epic stories in an intimate setting.

Our most successful art asks our community to question beliefs, focus on relationships, and develop self-awareness. Southern California audiences of all ages and backgrounds build community together while engaging with this most visceral and primal of storytelling techniques. ANW's production of classic theatre includes all plays we believe will be part of our cultural legacy. We interpret these stories through the work of a professional resident company—a group of artists whose work is critical to their community—based on the belief that trust among artists and between artists and audience can only be built through an honest and continuing dialogue. Our plays will be performed in rotating repertory, sometimes simultaneously in multiple spaces, and buttressed by meaningful supporting programs to create a symphonic theatrical experience for artists and audience.

In its 27-year history, A Noise Within has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle's revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

More than 45,000 individuals attend productions at A Noise Within annually. In addition, the theatre draws over 18,000 student participants to its Education Program. Students benefit from in-classroom workshops, conservatory training, subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, post-performance discussions with artists, and free standards-based study guides.

Study Guides

A Noise Within creates study guides in alignment with core reading, listening, speaking, and performing arts standards to help educators prepare their students for their visit to our theatre. Study guides are available at no extra cost to download through our website: www.anoisewithin.org. The information and activities outlined in these guides are designed to work in compliance with the California VAPA standards, The Common Core, and 21st Century Learning Skills.

Study guides include background information on the plays and playwrights, historical context, textual analysis, in-depth discussion of A Noise Within's artistic interpretation of the work, statements from directors and designers, as well as discussion points and suggested classroom activities. Guides from past seasons are also available to download from the website.

Study Guide Credits

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Ingrid Musa . . . . . *Author*

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aNoiseWithin
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