

The Arthurian Knight Remythified Ovidian: The Failures of Courtly Love in Three Late Medieval Glosses

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Conjoincture—the interpolation of classical myth in Arthurian romance in the Middle Ages—usually involves an allusion or image used to gloss or interpret the transgressions of the knight. Its very hybridity implicitly conveys the commentary tradition’s well-known moralizations as a means of critiquing culture and its gender relations, particularly as embodied in the practice of the courtly, especially involving courtly love—the reception of which is the subject of this collection. Such crossover I will argue here by means of three examples of an Arthurian knight glossed in a late medieval romance (or commentary on a romance or epic), implicitly or explicitly, by means of a classical mythological figure who is, to

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use Jauss's term, "remythified" by the comparison, which depends upon the cultural and historicized adaptation of classical myth particular to a specific time and place.¹ The knight might appear either in the text of a vernacular work involving classical mythology or in an accompanying illustration. The representation of each knight signifies an amalgam of two traditions, the courtly and scholastic, the Celtic and classical, the Arthurian and mythological. Here, Perceval is conflated with Perseus, the exemplar of the good—virtuous and chaste; Lancelot is paired with Hermaphroditus, who succumbs to his own self-love in distancing himself from the love of real women; and similarly, Gawain and Pygmalion are linked with Narcissus.

All three knights figured originally and prominently in twelfth-century vernacular romances by Chrétien de Troyes, namely, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (*Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart*) and the unfinished *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal* (*Perceval, the Story of the Grail*). There, all three knights appear as Other, or foreign to the Arthurian court: they come from abroad or from some kind of deliberately rustic or alien site or situation. Lancelot of Benwick comes from the Saumarois region of Anjou–Touraine; Perceval was raised outside civilization, in Wales, like Welsh (and Breton) knight Gawain. And for whatever reason, while all three are exemplary as knights, whether in valor and might, spirituality, or loyalty and courtesy, they are tested in the romances in various ways, often sexually, in relation to their courtly relationships with women—and fail.

That a classical and mythological subtext underpins the chivalric and courtly narrative in some Arthurian romances has long been recognized by scholars. Medieval vernacular legends of King Arthur often reworked aspects of antique epics; at the same time, medieval authors' familiarity with classical myth allowed its use as a gloss on the Arthurian legendarium. The long history of scholarship on the classical underpinnings of Arthurian romance, particularly from Ovid, begins early in the twentieth century with Edmond Faral,² and with Charles Bertram Lewis tracing classical sources, Greek and mythological, in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.³ Several more recent sources involve the use of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a means of authorization in the medieval romance or chronicle, specifically in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*) in relation to the patronymic figure Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas, and founder of Britain; and on varied heroic aspects of the classical as transmitted by Latin chronicles such

as Geoffrey's and by the Virgilian and Homeric epic tradition resurfacing in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in a new collection edited by Edward L. Risdén.⁴ Such authorization, when imbedded in the medieval text through classical mythological reference, allusion, or analogy, reflects a rise of interest in national identity: other patronymic founders of European nations were similarly connected genealogically with Aeneas after the fall of Troy, who in the *Aeneid* fled to Italy, where he founded the Roman Empire. The myths elevated Arthurian romance to the stature of the great foundational epics by the ancient Greek and Roman authors, Homer, Virgil, and also Ovid, who had joined Virgil as a canonical author in the school and university commentary tradition by the twelfth century.

Another recent study, by K. Sarah-Jane Murray, roots several romances by Chrétien de Troyes in twin antecedents—firstly, Greek and Roman traditions, namely, Plato's *Timaeus* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and secondly, the Celtic, as found in Irish monastic saints' lives and *immrama*.⁵ This intertwining of different traditions involves more than a straightforward identification of classical and Celtic influence in the medieval work. The flowering of late medieval vernacular romance and court poetry is often regarded, even in recent scholarship, as somehow separate and distinct from the medieval scholastic/clerical tradition of commentary on classical works such as the Latin epic. This perception assumes, however incorrectly, that educated poets then, as now, might safely ignore in the formation of their own poems whatever passed for the latest trend in medieval literary criticism on Virgil and Ovid. However, poets were often familiar not only with the original texts of the epics studied in courses on grammar, but also with material from commentaries on them in manuscripts available at monasteries or in royal libraries or declaimed in lectures at the great universities of Paris or Oxford.

As far as romances are concerned, such a familiarity is particularly evident in relation to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for which a commentary tradition and *translatio studii* only began modestly in the sixth century and in earnest in the twelfth century, rather than much earlier, especially in the fourth to sixth centuries, as was the case with Servius's and Fulgentius's influential commentaries on the *Aeneid*. Witness to the impact of this singular event in regard to twelfth-century French romance is the existence of anonymous adaptation of Ovid in the vernacular—not only the mythological *Narcisse* but also *Pyramus et Tisbé* and, as well, Chrétien's

own adaptation of *Philomela*.⁶ An excellent early study of the Ovidian influence on Chrétien's *Conte du graal*, in particular, of the myth of Narcissus, as found in both Ovid and Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, is that of Michelle Freeman (1976).⁷ Freeman also discusses the influence of themes and symbols in Ovid (and other authors, for example, of the *Roman d'Enéas*) on Chrétien, in particular, found in the myths of Pelops, Procne, Minerva and Arachne, and Myrrha, in *The Poetics of "Translatio Studii" and "Conjointure": Chrétien de Troyes's "Cligés"* (1979).⁸ And it has been argued very plausibly that Chrétien himself may have drawn on contemporary Ovid glosses by Arnulf of Orleans in constructing *Erec et Enide*.⁹ Another author notably famous for having drawn on Ovid and on glosses on the *Metamorphoses* is Jean de Meun in his late thirteenth-century continuation of the courtly-love romance begun by Guillaume de Lorris, the *Roman de la Rose*.

That there was, in fact, crossover among many literary traditions, genres, modes, poetics, sources, and cultures in the late medieval vernacular work has been attested by Martine Meuwese in her work on mostly late Arthurian codices in the Netherlands, although she most frequently identifies inaccuracies and mistakes rather than what might be regarded as intentional cross-cultural breaches.¹⁰ As additional manuscripts of known Arthurian works are classified, described, and studied, scholars may likely find that there exist additional disjunctions and odd interpretations that vex scholars' formal expectations but add to our understanding of the complexity of the transmission of genres and traditions.

Here, I will demonstrate this crossover by means of three examples of an Arthurian knight glossed in a late medieval romance (or commentary on a romance or epic), implicitly or explicitly, in terms of a classical mythological figure. These mythological figures all appear in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or in an Ovidian context: a commentary or gloss on the *Metamorphoses*, a commentary on an Ovidianized poem, or a remythification of a late medieval Ovidian prosimetrum commentary that bears the marks of slippage between the mythological vernacular and its genre as commentary. What appears to be idealization of the chivalric hero in text or illumination conceals, in the three examples I will discuss, an ironic and critical subtext about the dangers of narcissism and pride in the hero's role—in short, what appears to be a more clerical critique of the knight's anti-courtly (and misogynistic) behavior justified by the spiritual danger of succumbing to deadly sin. The classical myths used to gloss the knights' roles as courtly lovers are those of Narcissus, Hermaphroditus,

Adonis, Perseus, and Pygmalion. Most of these mythological figures also appear in the *Rose*, a thirteenth-century work seminal for the understanding of medieval courtly love and a bridge between Ovid and the romance. The courtly-love condemnation of excessive adherence to the chivalric can be, in part, explained by the borrowing of Ovidian mythological figures from the *Rose*, or found in a commentary on, or a poem indebted to or influenced by, the *Rose*.

LANCELOT: AMANT, MARS, AND HERMAPHRODITUS

As a type of the *Rose*'s protagonist, the lover Amant, Lancelot is glossed because of his bed, known as the Perilous Bed. According to Charles V's physician, Évrart de Conty (ca. 1330–1405), the Perilous Bed is described in the *Istoire de Lancelot* (*History of Lancelot*), presumably that romance written by Chrétien known as *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*. This gloss appears in Évrart's prose moralization of a very long (30,000-line) anonymous poem that itself "glosses" the *Roman de la Rose*, the *Livre des Echecs amoureux* (*Book of the Chess of Love*) (ca. 1375), also believed to have been authored by physician de Conty.¹¹ According to him, the goddess Diana in *Chess of Love* describes the Perilous Bed of Lancelot in the *Rose*'s Garden of Mirth (Vergier de Deduit), on which the lover will not rest well because its context is one of great peril.

Pour ce donc que le lit est ordené pour reposer, et le repos n'est pas bon ne seur ou il y a peril, sy come il y avoit ou lit perilleux dessusdit ouquel Lancelot se coucha par sa grant hardiesse, sy come l'ystoire faint, pour ce en parle Dyane pour segnefier a l'acteur dessusdit qu'il ne fait bon reposer ne arrester ou vergier de Deduit qui est avironnés de tant et de sy grans perilz.

(Because, then, a bed is ordered for repose, and repose is not good or safe where there is danger, as there was in this perilous bed in which Lancelot lay by his great boldness, as the history says and pretends, Diana speaks of it to signify to the author that he will not rest well in the Garden of Mirth, which is surrounded by so many and such great dangers.)¹²

The bed of dangers is then compared with that bed on which Venus (goddess of love) and Mars (god of war) were surprised by her husband, Vulcan. In the *Rose*, in which the Garden of Deduit offers the lover idleness (through Oiseuse, the gatekeeper) in which to gaze on the Rose, the dangers of the bed are similarly the consequences of adulterous

love, one possible component of courtly love, at least for Lancelot. In Évrart's commentary, the bed in which the husband finds his lady asleep with another knight resembles another bed at the end of the book "The Knight of the Cart" in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, when Lancelot's tell-tale blood from breaking into her chamber marks Guenevere's sheet and suspicions are raised against her and the unidentified knight of Arthur's court who was in her bed.

As the unnamed Knight of the Cart in Chrétien de Troyes's romance, chivalrous Lancelot, beloved of Guenevere, might well be described as a type of Mars. Mars is notably depicted riding in a lowly cart in an important late fifteenth-century Flemish manuscript of a moralized French prose Ovid (Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thottske 399, fol. 6va).



Certainly in various adventures in Chrétien's romance Lancelot is subjected to the temptation of female flesh other than Guenevere's. Yet in this instance, when he steps into a humble and ignominious cart similar to that of the god Mars but lacking a horse and desperate to pursue and rescue Arthur's queen from abduction by Meleagant, he rides in a vehicle associated with transportation for criminals.¹³ This extraordinary and exaggerated deference to Guenevere's wishes reveals his worship of the lady as misplaced; his dilemma—whether to privilege courtly love over chivalric and feudal decorum—tests his devotion to Love and to her. That is, Lancelot's hesitation for two steps (in deference to Reason) before he climbs on the cart, in Guenevere's eyes, reveals his lack of devotion to her. More importantly, the criminal's cart into which he climbs symbolically foreshadows his actual treachery to king and country through his later illegal abduction of her to prevent her death by fire.

Évrart's commentary also places this interjected tale of lover Lancelot, narrated by Diana, goddess of virginity, just before the related moralization on the unhappy relationship between Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. The tales of Lancelot and Hermaphroditus relate to one another because of a similarity between the meanings of the fountain of love in the *Rose's* Garden of Deduit, so perilous to Amant, and the fountains' symbolism in the myths of Narcissus and Salmacis. The two crystals in Deduit's fountain, according to its authors, particularly Jean de Meun, offer back the reflection of the Lover's eyes, but only mirror back to him half the garden.

Any interpretation of this *conjoincture* of the two tales, accordingly, must center negatively on the limited perspective and selfishness of courtly love (or, more philosophically, on the subjectivity of love, in that the selection of the beloved must be, by definition, personal and unique). In the case of the fountain of Narcissus, it, too, mirror-like, reflects back his own image, one that, while evoking his desire for what appears to be a beautiful young man, leads inevitably to his death by drowning. The myth exemplifies a modern sense of narcissism, a deficiency in the ability to love others, or a kind of spiritual death.

But in the case of the fountain of Salmacis ("Salmaris," misspelled in the text), Évrart provides a retelling that stresses the role of her fountain as a lead-into "bed," construed as sexual and female, and "fountain," allegorized later as the womb. Hermaphroditus is so attracted to

the beauty of the fountain's waters that he bathes in it, when Salmacis sees him there; and "sy le desira lors soudainement et fu sy fort esprise de s'amour que elle vint au plus pres de ly que elle pouvoit et le semont d'amours" (she desired him suddenly. And she was so surprised by her love that she came as close to him as she could and invited him to love). What she actually says is even more explicit: "Vien, disoit elle, a moy, tres doulz amis, et nous alons tous deux esbatre ensamble en un mesmez *lit!*" (Come to me, sweetest love, and we shall go together and enjoy ourselves in a *bed* [my emphasis]).¹⁴ Because Hermaphroditus does not know what love is and is ashamed by her words ("Mais cely, qui ne savoit que c'est d'amours ainz estoit tout honteux de ses paroles"), he rejects her offer: "ne se vouloit point a ce consentir, ainz refusoit du tout ce que elle ly offroit" (he did not at all want to consent; but completely refused what she offered him).¹⁵

Consider the manuscript image of Hermaphroditus pulling away from Salmacis as she tries to embrace him (in Christine de Pizan's prosimetrum commentary on Ovid, "Epistre Othea," British Library MS Harley 4432, fol. 132v).



In Christine's text, when Salmacis joins herself to him as if they were one and then calls on the gods to make their "unis" (union) permanent, Hermaphroditus takes on a "double nature et double sex," that is, "en partie home et en partie fame" (part-man and part-woman). This stream of the fountain of Salmacis from this point transforms any bather into half-woman, "effeminé et fait femme a moitié." The hermaphrodite, like Hermaphroditus, then, according to Évrart is a product, or son, of Mercury (Hermes, a masculine planet) and Venus (a feminine planet), also Aphrodite, in Greek, from *aphros*, or "froides," foam-like.¹⁶

Évrart's interpretation of the myth goes on to define the process of generation in Aristotelian terms, the role of gender difference ascribed to "male" and "female" qualities, which necessitates that females be included in the process as well as males. Of interest is his scientific explanation of masculinity as domination over the female—and femininity as the opposite, to then imply the womanish and uxorious quality of Lancelot before his *domina* Guenevere: according to the philosophers, "la cause de masculinité general est la dominacion de la vertu du masle sur la matiere que la femme y envoie et la bonne obeissance d'icelle. Et la general cause de feminité est au contraire la feblesce du masle et la grant resistance et inobedience de la matiere dessusdite" (the general cause of masculinity is the domination and power of the male over what the female sends there and her good obedience. And the general cause of femininity [*sic*] is the weakness of the male and the great resistance and disobedience of this matter).¹⁷

Most interesting in relation to the Hermaphroditus gloss on Lancelot—relative to the knight's essential union of male and female—is Évrart's typology of males and females, of which there are five kinds, each on a continuum ranging from male masculine and female masculine to male feminine and female feminine, with the partly male and female in the middle, the hermaphrodite:

car les aucuns sont masle et qui aussi ont masculines meurs; et aucunes femmes aussi sont natureles femmes et ont meurs feminines; les autres sont qui sont masles et qui neantmoins ont feminines meurs; et aussi sont aucunes femmes homages et hardies et de meurs masculins; et quintement aucuns sont qui ne sont ne vray masle ne varies femelles aussi, ainz ont aussi come moienement l'une nature et l'autre, et ce sont ceulx qui sont hermofrodite, qui sont en partie home et en partie femme, come dit est.

(For some are male and have masculine mores, and some are females and have feminine mores. Others are males, but have feminine mores. And also some bold, manlike women have masculine mores. And some are neither true males nor true females, but as if half-way between the one nature and the other. And these are the hermaphrodites who are partly man and partly woman, as was said.)¹⁸

Ultimately, Évrart understands “Salmacis” as the power “qui encline a féminité” (that inclines toward femininity), with the fountain representing the woman’s womb, or the “lieu naturel ou la conception se fait naturellement” (natural place where conception occurs naturally).¹⁹ The Hermaphroditus myth, according to this court physician, mythologizes the way generation occurs within the womb and how sex is determined.

Because of Lancelot’s refusal of the proffered bed and its attendant association with female sexuality and its delights (or perils), he resembles Hermaphroditus, who refuses Salmacis. In short, Lancelot is resistant to other women besides Guenevere, his love for whom cannot be divulged—that is, he is resistant to the Perilous Bed, except in the case of Guenevere. If Lancelot, Narcissus, and Hermaphroditus are all connected (as they are in the commentary on the “Chess of Love” through the narration of the goddess Diana, whose province is, after all, virginity), Lancelot can be said to be a type of Amant, negatively construed as either self-centered or effeminate in nature, but lacking in commitment to any real woman because he cannot truly give himself wholly to another.

Évrart’s commentary interprets Lancelot as a knight whose sexual orientation as the courtly lover Amant is itself “perilous.” Beginning with the *Rose* as a “gloss” on Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, the figure Amant appears in a varied series of “glosses” and commentaries that function as a chain of portraits of types of the courtly lover. Évrart’s Aristotelian commentary also cites other Arthurian romances aside from Chrétien’s in its interpretations of this myth, including one narrated by Diana.

Immediately prior to her fable of Lancelot and the Perilous Bed, Diana contextualizes the reason for its inclusion by introducing its

British source and identifying women and the perils of courtly love as the chief danger, which she then links with the fables of Venus and Adonis and of Narcissus. This romance, set in the time of King Arthur long ago, she explains, tells “des dames de Bretaigne qui anciennement au temps du roy Artus ne daignoient amer nul chevalier quelconques s’il n’estoit ançoiz esprouvés ester preux et vaillans as armes, a tout le moins trios foiz” (of the ladies of Britain who did not deign to love any knight whatsoever unless he had already proved to be doughty in arms and valiant at least three times). So Venus accordingly warns her lover Adonis against the cruel beasts found in the “vergier amoureux,” that is, the garden of love, namely, “dames et damoiselles de grant fierté et de grant resistance, qui n’ont cure d’amer, se n’est espoir a leur election et a leur voullenté” (ladies and girls who are very proud and have great resistance, who have no heart for loving, except, perhaps, at their own choosing and by their own will).²⁰ Like the fable of Lancelot and Hermaphroditus, this fable similarly illustrates the dangers of love, specifically, the heartless (loveless) nature of some women. Such dangers are also found, as we shall later see, in the fable of Welsh knight Gawain as linked with the artist Pygmalion.

But first, a look at Perseus, another Ovidian example, who reverses the comparison of Arthurian knight with classical mythological figure.

PERCEVAL: PERSEUS

In Stephen Scrope’s mid-fifteenth-century English translation of Christine de Pizan’s *Epistre Othea*, it is Arthurian knight “Perceval” who is substituted for Ovidian mythological figure Perseus. In Christine’s original fable 5, Perseus, among other valiant deeds in his resumé, is said (mistakenly) to have ridden Pegasus through the air (it was Bellerophon who rode Pegasus, but Perseus’s beheading of the Gorgon Medusa that resulted in the winged horse Pegasus springing from her blood).²¹ In addition, in the same fable, Perseus slays the sea-monster that threatens the captive Andromeda. Perseus, Christine tells us, also bears a shining shield and strong sword that have enabled him to overcome various

opponents (including that same snaky-haired Medusa, whose story appears later in the *Epistre Othea*, in fable 55).

However, in Scrope's translation, Perseus is transformed into the Arthurian knight Perceval (Perciualle), who kills a dragon rather than a sea-monster, a transformation that graces one of the only six illustrations in the Cambridge manuscript of that translation (St. John's College Library, MS 208, fol. 9r).



This manuscript, intended for Margaret of Anjou, who married Henry VI in 1445 after being conveyed to England by John Talbot, the first earl of Shrewsbury, provides as its first image a frontispiece illustrating Scrope's presentation of his book to her. Its purpose as a wedding gift may suggest one clue to the translator and his illuminator's motivation for the change.

Scrope and his illuminator substitute Perceval for Perseus primarily because of the horse and magical weapons used against the

monstrous Gorgon in Perseus's original myth and because of the two similar but different monsters in the conflated stories involving Perseus in Christine's original fable. Christine describes Perseus as like a good (honorable) knight errant because he returned Andromeda safely to her parents after she had been captured by a dragon (or sea-serpent). Perseus is also valorous because he carries both a shining shield (the one that mirrors back Medusa's gaze and thereby defeats her) and a sword of strength and steadfastness. An idealized epitome of the knight who offers succor to maidens, Perseus is allegorized by Christine as the chivalrous spirit who rescues the soul from the enemy of hell by mastery of sin for the pleasure of God.

As far as the dragon is concerned, in both Christine's fable and Scrope's translation the sea-serpent as Andromeda's monstrous captor merges with the Gorgon (Medusa, named neither by Christine nor by Scrope). Later, Scrope's Middle English passage in fable 55 (on Medusa) notes that this "serpent" "had such a propirte þat euery man þat bihelde hir was chaungid sodenly in-to a stoon." We know from the classical myth that the "serpent" is Medusa the Gorgon; her snaky locks are here mistaken as literally serpentine so that she is conflated with the sea-serpent threatening Andromeda. Christine's moral gloss interprets Medusa as a beautiful town that has become "venymose" through vice, with "Persival" as the hero who, seeing his own strength and knighthood in his shield, takes away the vicious power of the city—specifically, the covetousness of a "faire ladi" who is changed because of her ill will. When "Percivale þe worthi knyght, went for to fiȝt wiȝ þat fers beste," he lifted his shield, saw his own image reflected in it instead of the monster's, and lopped off its head.²² Allegorically, for Scrope, the Gorgon represents that which should not be beheld, that is, "delites," apparently sexual in nature.

Of interest in both Christine's and Scrope's versions of fable 55, on the Gorgon, is Medusa's backstory. Christine literally feminizes the Gorgon (the still unnamed Medusa) as a beautiful woman raped by Phoebus Apollo in the temple of his sister, Diana, goddess of virginity and the hunt. However, for Christine, the angry goddess subsequently metamorphoses the Gorgon into a serpent because of this sacrilege to her rather than changing her hair into the serpents

noted by Ovid in the original fable.²³ Then, in Scrope's translation of the initial proem of fable 55, he masculinizes the Gorgon and transforms "Perseus" into Perceval. Scrope's advice to the reader is presented via Christine's persona, the wise invented goddess of wisdom, Othea, who addresses this letter of chivalric education to the youthful Trojan Hector: "Haue good sad mynde vppon *Persyual*." Apparently nothing is said about the injustice of the Gorgon's rape and transformation.

Why does Scrope substitute "Perceval" for "Perseus"? Likely because of the Arthurian knight's chivalric valor and self-sacrificial heroism, which contrast with Phoebus Apollo's lust for Medusa in the original fable 55 in the *Epistre Othea*. Further, the misogynistic projection of the Gorgon into a monstrous object of disgust and terror is unseemly for the joyous occasion for which Scrope's manuscript was written. In the St. John's College "Epistle of Othea" manuscript-illustration, the figure of Perceval is actually identified by the name "Percualle" or "Percyualle" as well as in Scrope's text. The knight rescues Andromeda from the dragon as he nobly directs his horse Pegasus through the air. Perceval is described in the accompanying text as intent on delivering Andromeda "Fro the bellue" (from the conflict).²⁴ In short, the Arthurian knight typifies virtue and goodness itself for Scrope (just as Ovidian hero Perseus does in fable 5 for Christine de Pizan), admirable for returning Andromeda safely to her kin.

The point, as the Middle English "glose" (and its original) makes clear, is "that alle knyghtis scholde socoure wommen that hadde nede of theire socoyre." Such succor was not available to rape victim Gorgon Medusa, but Christine lauds heroic Perseus and his horse for his rescue of Andromeda from a threatened rape. Together, Arthurian knight Perceval and Ovidian Pegasus represent "the good name that a good knyghte scholde haue and gete be his good desertes," with the hero's riding of the mythological horse signifying the conveyance of his name throughout many countries. Allegorically, Andromeda is the soul that should be delivered from the "feend of hell," just as Pegasus is the good angel of the "chiuallerous spirite," and the good name desired should be for "the pleasaunce of God."²⁵

So it is no surprise that, mythographically Perseus (who, like Narcissus and Hermaphroditus, appears in Ovid commentaries and their illustrations), according to Pierre Bersuire's moralized Ovid, is interpreted as a brave soldier who killed Gorgon, daughter of King Phorcus, ruler of the

Gorgons.²⁶ John of Garland, a century earlier, in his *Integumenta Ovidii*, interpreted Perseus's weapons as the accoutrements of reason, with Pallas's spear representing *obiectio* (charge, blame), his helmet, *ratio* (reason), and his shield, "strength in views."²⁷ The penultimate (fourteenth) book of the Third Vatican Mythographer is devoted to him as one of the three sons of Jove, the first two being Bacchus, liberator of male seed, and Hercules, *philosophus*; Perseus's horse, Pegasus, signifies *fama*, the *fons aeternus* that springs from the shedding of the blood of Medusa, or *oblivio*, "oblivion."²⁸

Medusa in the Ovidian tradition and in Scrope's translation—but not in Christine's original text—apparently exists only as a representation of the threat of being forgotten, the enemy of the good knight. Yet, instead of Medusa depicted as an inhuman serpent being struck down by Perseus's sword, one illumination substitutes a more literally feminized representation of the "Gorgon." In the same late fifteenth-century Flemish manuscript of a French prose moralized Ovid in which, as noted previously, Mars rides in a criminal's cart like Lancelot, three Gorgon sisters appear in long gowns, one of whom crouches before a Perseus with raised sword hiding behind his famous shield that reflects back Medusa's very human face (Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thottske 399, fol. 138vb, ca. 1480).



Medusa is neither a serpent nor a monster, and the lone eye that she must share with her two sisters does her no good when she gazes into Perseus's shield. If passive and bound Andromeda does not seem to warrant much mention in either Christine's original text or Scrope's translation, then Medusa in Christine and in the illustration of the Gorgon in this notable manuscript of a "Moralized Ovid" surely invites the viewer's pity.

Perceval/Perseus in their chastity and virtue function as antitheses to the self-loving Lancelot/Hermaphroditus and Pygmalion and Gawain, the latter pair who are also linked by means of the figure of Narcissus.

GAWAIN: PYGMALION AND NARCISSUS

Sir Gawain, in the Middle English Arthurian romance of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1360?–1380?), is only indirectly linked with the Ovidian mythological figure Pygmalion (via the *Rose*) by means of a shared image from its sister text, the *Pearl*, which appears in the same unique manuscript as *Sir Gawain* and written by the same anonymous author, known as the *Gawain* or *Pearl*-Poet. In the elegiac dream vision of the *Pearl*, the mythological allusion to the sculptor Pygmalion in a long passage contrasts his own artistic skill with that greater art of Nature without any explicit reference to Arthur's nephew as hero of the romance. However, the allusion, if read within the context of the glosses on Pygmalion in the "Moralized Ovid" tradition, including the *Rose* (in which a similar comparison is made between Nature, Aristotle, and Pygmalion), actually can be understood to work as a gloss on both Pygmalion and Gawain. As an unnatural lover of the sculptor's own self-created "image"—the beautiful woman for whom he obsessively lusts and implores Venus to turn into flesh—the artist glosses Gawain's own failure as a courtly lover. Gawain is similarly too absorbed with his own purity and excellence as a knight—that shadow or image that he has created by means of his reputation and fame as Pygmalion has his beautiful female statue—to love any real woman. Pygmalion, the ancestor of Venus's lover Adonis, was himself the product of an incestuous union between Myrrha and the father she loved too much. Both sculptor and knight are similarly linked to Narcissus and the latter's misdirected love for his "umbra" (image, or shadow). Supplanting any possibility of love of another is Gawain's own chivalric desire to uphold Uncle Arthur's fame as king of Camelot.

Sir Gawain in the romance is described as a perfect pearl of purity, the pearl image borrowed from the *Pearl*, by the same poet. Indeed, his adversary in the romance, the Green Knight, describes Sir Gawain as specifically pearl-like in comparison to all other good knights, as if they were merely “white peas”: “On þe fautlest freke þat euer on fote 3ede;/As perle bi þe quite pese is of prys more,/So is Gawayn, in god faith, bi oþer gay kny3tez” (One of the most perfect men who ever walked on the earth./As pearls are more valuable than the white peas,/So is Gawayn, in all truth, before other fair knights” (my emphasis).²⁹ And when Gawain fails to “defeat” the Green Knight at the Green Chapel, the Green Knight, who regards him as having been “polished/purified” like a pearl, or made clean again, priest-like “absolves” Gawain because the knight has confessed, admitted his fault, and done penance by means of the nicks from the Green Knight’s ax-blade. The Green Knight pronounces Gawain as a result to be “*polysed* of þat ply3t, and pured as clene/As þou hade3 neuer forfeþet syþen þou wat3 fyrst borne” (cleansed of that guilt, quickly purified,/As if you had never sinned since you were first born).³⁰

Also described as a gem, but more ironically—“a juel for þe jopardé” (a jewel for the jeopardy)—is the tempting green girdle offered to Gawain by the Lady as a safeguard against the anticipated death-blow to his neck to be rendered by the Green Knight. This gift is as singular as Gawain himself, peerless among men (as he is described by the poet in the much-interpreted five-fives exposition in the pentangle stanza). However, the girdle is, in the consequence of his acceptance of it, far more dangerous as a threat to his spiritual condition because of the magical protection it confers upon him, when kept hidden from his host lord Bertilak to protect his life rather than rendered as the day’s “winnings,” as their pledged contract demands it should be.³¹ And because Gawain does succumb to this temptation of concupiscence, or “lust of the eyes,” greed, in the meeting at the Chapel with the Green Knight (Bertilak in disguise, testing the knight as the best in Arthur’s kingdom), he also succumbs to his own vanity.

In *Pearl*, the title refers to a literal pearl, according to the dream frame, said to have been “lost” by the narrator, but actually the Pearl-Maiden (the poet’s young daughter, who has died, and who reappears in his dream vision to instruct him in the meaning of the afterlife). Her beauty in this poem is described by the Dreamer in a passage borrowed from Jean de Meun’s *Rose* as transcending any creation by Nature, or

by any philosopher of science such as Aristotle, or by any artist such as Pygmalion: “Py beauté com neuer of nature;/Pymalyon paynted neuer py vys,/Ne Arystotel nawþer, by hys lettrure” (Never in nature was such beauty’s lure;/Pygmalion your visage did never devise,/Nor did Aristotle either, with all his learning).³²

But pearl-like Gawain is both creation and yet also creator (or, re-creator) of his self. As scholars have long noted, the pearl image and its associations of purity, perfection, and innocence concatenates as a method of repetitive glossation throughout all four poems in the unique manuscript, British Library Cotton Nero A.x, beginning with the first, *Pearl*, to the allegorical and biblical poems *Purity* and *Patience*, and only then to the fourth poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. By that point, the recurrence of the pearl image becomes ironic in relation to Gawain’s failures, given its prior metaphorical and allegorical association with both a lost girl and the wise Pearl-Maiden—and with a jewel often worn by women, as if he, too, were a lost gem or pearl, feminized by this association. Together, the four poems gloss one another intertextually, through this and other images, to form a type of rosary, as has often been noted by scholars. Sir Gawain, at the end of the four, as agent of his own spiritual life portrays a flawed self-creator like Pygmalion.

In *Pearl*, the mythological Pygmalion vies with Nature, at least, in his sculpting of an ivory maiden so perfect that he falls in love with her beauty (not unlike the paternal dreamer and persona who from her birth loved the now-lost child), except Pygmalion’s obsessive love for an object he has created is unnatural. Equally unnatural is Gawain’s lack of love for any woman, as reflected in his chaste response to Lady Bertilak, no matter how courteous he may appear. True, this chastity is necessitated by his contract with Lord Bertilak to give his host daily whatever he wins inside the castle as the host will give to him what he has won outside. This contract’s terms are eventually exacerbated by his initial promise to the Green Knight to suffer what he assumes will be the same kind of death-blow he himself thought he had dealt to the giant in Arthur’s court during Christmas festivities.

The figure of Pygmalion deserves further consideration as a gloss on unnatural love relevant to abstemious Gawain, especially because of the best-known medieval instance of the artist’s appearance at the end of another romance, the *Rose*. Pygmalion crops up at the crucial climax

when Venus's brand sets afire the castle in which the lady is kept and the Dreamer physically assaults the Rose. This moment suggests what spurs his unnatural love is a lustful desire for consummation with his own creation and an avoidance of real women, as is the case with Jean de Meun's lover, named appropriately Amant. The *Rose* myth presents Pygmalion as an ambitious and self-promoting sculptor in all materials (wood, stone, metals, bone, and wax), who "por son grant angin esprouver,/car onc de li nus ne l'ot meudre,/ausint con por grant los aqueudre,/se vost a portrere deduire" (wished to divert himself in producing a likeness that would prove his skill [for no one was better than he] and also gain him great renown).³³ The ivory girl he carves is so lifelike he falls in love with her beauty. Like Sir Gawain, Pygmalion appears to be testing himself by means of his competitive artistry, if not by his valor and courtesy; for both figures, fame (and, specifically, in the case of Gawain, fame as most valorous and loyal knight within the court of Arthur) is the goal.

The Ovidian myth of Pygmalion falling in love with the ivory girl Galatea, a story superficially charming, is indeed a narrative that traces the artist's fall into sin, specifically, into pride, lust, and avarice, as in the *Rose*. Pygmalion's fall is rewarded there, as in the Ovidian myth, by the goddess Venus because this lover has given himself over completely to her and what she represents. Pygmalion is so obsessed by the beauty of his artistry that he dresses the statue in clothing, plays musical instruments for her and sings to her, lays her down in bed, and then petitions the god of love and "Saint Venus," at the altar in her temple, to "ma requeste oez" (hear my request) and grace him by making the ivory girl live so that he can have sex with her.³⁴ Pygmalion acknowledges his chaste folly in loving a deaf, mute image, one "qui ne se crole ne se mue/ne ja de moi merci n'avra" (that neither stirs nor moves nor will ever show me grace), wondering how such a love could have wounded him. But it is because he then abandons chastity out of desire for the girl that Venus heeds his prayer.³⁵

Jean de Meun's point is that Pygmalion is a sinner chained to the body and, over and above this narrative, unnatural in his perverted and misdirected love, as the artist himself admits: "Mes ceste amour est si horrible/qu'el ne vient mie de Nature./Trop mauvesement m'i nature,/Nature en moi mauvés fill a;/Quant me fist formant s'avilla (But this love is so horrible that it doesn't come from Nature. I am acting

despicably in this case. Nature has a bad son in me; she disgraced herself when she made me).³⁶ Pygmalion's lust for Galatea is imaged in an illumination accompanying the text of the *Rose* (The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, MS. Douce 364, fol. 153v) that clearly evidences his hand on the small girl's pudendum/womb.



Even more explicitly, in the original Ovidian myth (*Metamorphoses* 10.243), the fates of the progeny of Pygmalion and Galatea reveal how ill-directed is Pygmalion's narcissism and lustfulness. Galatea becomes pregnant with Paphus (of the island Paphos), who begets King Cynaras, deceived by his daughter Myrrha into sleeping with her. By means of this incest she will conceive the beautiful youth Adonis (himself doomed to be loved by Venus and to die by the tusk of a boar). The reference in the *Rose* to the unnatural narcissism of Pygmalion that leads to disaster and death in love unfortunately also foreshadows the destructive and violent actual ending of Jean de Meun's dream narrative when the lover Amant rapes the virginal Rose (an act of

phallic penetration that Amant likens to Hercules performing his heroic descent into the underworld).

Pygmalion figures in the mythographic tradition of Ovid commentary on this fable that begins with Arnulf of Orleans in the twelfth century³⁷ and continues with what is known as the Vulgate commentary, the *Ovide moralisé*, and the commentaries of Giovanni del Virgilio, Pierre Bersuire, and Thomas of Walsingham.³⁸ In the *accessus* to Arnulf's moralized Ovid in one manuscript, Pygmalion's transformation of his statue starts as a type of magical mutation (from one body to another, inanimate to inanimate or animate, animate to inanimate or inanimate), but his mutation is also a moral type, because one of the bodies involved is human (both of these types of mutation as distinguished from natural and spiritual mutation, that is, a change in elements or in spirit).³⁹ What most interests Arnulf, in other words, the "mutation from one body into another body," begins, as I have argued elsewhere, with Aristotle and the revolutionary interest in natural materialism in the twelfth century but moves on to other, more problematic and figurative forms of transformation.⁴⁰ Pierre Bersuire's moral stance in his early fourteenth-century commentary on Ovid takes Pygmalion initially as a good religious man (that is, a *praedicator*, a "preacher") who helps women become more spiritual: he "convertit se ad imagines eburneas faciendas id est ad benignas sanctimoniales: & matronas in castitate & sanctitate informandas: & in moribus spiritualibus sculpendas" (converts himself to making ivory images, that is, forming holy women and matrons in chastity and sanctity and fashioning them in spiritual habits).⁴¹ Pygmalion's early abhorrence toward women changes when he begins to desire the statue. In the moral interpretation provided by Bersuire, he himself transforms ironically into a lecher because of his attraction to "carnis spurcicia" (the filth of the flesh).⁴² What is clear about Pygmalion in the Ovidian commentary tradition as a whole is that he represents perverted or misdirected love, a signification common also to Lancelot, as noted above, and to Gawain.

Pygmalion's cry of exaggerated self-reproach in the *Rose* resembles Gawain's at the end of his journey when the knight returns to court to confess his *unleuté*, "disloyalty," and then to wear in shame the girdle as *token of untrape*, "token of disloyalty."⁴³ Of course, the token of the green girdle might also signal that Gawain has slept with the lady and, therefore, accepted her gift in reflection of her favor, suggesting that his sin is lust.

In reality, it is not, unless the girdle signifies a lust for material life or for precious things (lust-of-the-eyes, or concupiscence). Gawain supposedly confesses a love that is a non-love: there is no love, courtly or otherwise, that he expresses for any mortal woman in *Sir Gawain*, which suggests that Gawain and Pygmalion are more alike than they seem to be at first glance. Gawain's own "ivory girl" is Mary, whose image graces the inside of his shield; he is almost too anxious to distance himself from the body of a real woman—like Pygmalion, initially, whose narcissism eventually results in his obsessive lust for his own creation. In a sense, Gawain's narcissism, evident in his excessive fault-finding with himself during his public "confession," leads the reader back to him once more as the subject, rather than to King Arthur or to his court. By means of Gawain's excessive self-blame, we see again what he has, like Pygmalion, created: a proud image of *himself* that he loves too much without any explicit self-understanding, even in the last lines of the poem.

In this context, it is startling to note that in the *Rose* Pygmalion inadvertently rationalizes his mad love for his statue of Galatea as superior to that madder love of Narcissus for his own reflected image—because he can actually embrace what he loves, unlike Narcissus, who yearns to touch his reflected image in the fountain:

Si n'ain je pas trop folement,
 car, se l'escriture ne ment,
 maint ont plus folement amé.
 N'ama jadis ou bois ramé,
 a la fonteine clere et pure,
 Narcisus sa propre figure,
 Quant cuida sa saif estanchier?

(But I do not love too foolishly, for, if writing does not lie, many have loved more dementedly. Didn't Narcissus, long ago in the branched forest, when he thought to quench his thirst, fall in love with his own face in the clear, pure fountain?)⁴⁴

In regard to the comparison Pygmalion makes between himself falling in love with what he has imaged in his own creation and Narcissus falling in love with his own image in the reflected pool (rather than with Echo), the two share an additional bond: spurning contact with human women (see, for

example, Narcissus literally turning away from Echo in Christine de Pizan's "Epistre Othea," London, British Library MS Harley 4431, fol. 132v).



Insofar as the *Pearl's* Pygmalion is concerned, the true artist must be considered as twofold: Nature or God, whoever created the Pearl-Maiden within the world of the *Pearl*. In contrast, the mortal artist is by necessity flawed: Pygmalion the sculptor, but also the *Pearl*-Poet, whose skill in poetry so successfully convinced his persona of the perfection of the pearl/Pearl-Maiden. When the Pearl-Maiden acknowledges that "even Aristotle" could not have created the perfection of the Pearl (or, presumably, the poem *Pearl*), she implies that artistry itself, unlike divine or natural creation, is somehow both magical and Pygmalion-like, and that the creation of a poem work of art transforms one body to another, like that of Galatea from ivory into flesh. Consequently, the real danger is always moral, in this case, as in the myth of Narcissus, a form of narcissism, or falling in love with one's creation. And here we return to the artist of *Gawain*, presumably the same as that of *Pearl*, who perhaps is not so perfect an artist in

creating the imperfect character of Gawain—or perhaps the author *is*, in that the green girdle is indeed a “pearl” of an artistic stratagem that has kept readers puzzled by its perfect complexity for so long.

The use of classical myth as reference and allusion—“glose”—in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century romance and dream vision by its very singularity draws attention to itself, most particularly in the placement of the *Rose’s* Pygmalion myth at the moment of panic by the castle’s inhabitants and the Rose’s subsequent rape. The use of Arthurian figure as gloss in a classical mythological narrative and mythographic commentary, such as the solidly didactic commentary of Évrart de Conty on the *Echeus amoureux*, or Christine de Pizan’s *Epistre Othea* (and Scrope’s Middle English *Epistle of Othea to Hector*), similarly stands apart from other more conventional fables to focus attention on the cultural clues these figures bear. Lancelot, who in Chrétien avoids the embraces of all women (equals the Perilous Bed) because he conceals a courtly-love relationship with his queen, in some sense, like Perceval and Gawain, avoids the reality of loving any woman.

But what do the clues point to? Is there a monastic and ecclesiastic bias against women and the flesh that inheres in chivalry as an institutional creation of the church? Or is there a more psychological deformation that occurs in all forms of narcissism, as types of incompleteness and frustration, selfishness and immaturity, within the more practical courtly milieu? Or is rape the real terror, and the anger of the Gorgon over her passivity against her rapist the unpleasant reality no man/rapist should have to face? That clerics read romances as well as wrote them and that aristocratic readers listened to clerics in church, medievalist scholars well understand. The notion that the boundaries between court and church, author and reader, courtly Arthurian romance and scholastic Ovidian commentary, and text and image might have disappeared in the writing or reading of late medieval vernacular works invites a reappraisal of the relationship between these dichotomies. The recovery of the commentary tradition—what passes for early literary criticism in the Middle Ages—and its manipulation by medieval poets in constructing a complex and multilayered poetic have begun to change that perception.

NOTES

1. See Hans Robert Jauss, “Allégorie, ‘remythisation’ et nouveau mythe: Réflexions sur la captivité chrétienne de la mythologie au moyen âge,” in *Mélanges d’histoire littéraire, de linguistique et de philologie romane*

- offerts à Charles Rostaing*, compiled by his colleagues, students, and friends (Liège, Belg.: Association des Romanistes de l'Université de Liège, 1974), 469–499. For the literal interpretation of myth, see Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Reading Myth: Classical Mythology and its Interpretations in Medieval French Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 8.
2. Edmond Faral, *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du moyen âge* (Paris: É. Champion, 1913).
 3. See Charles Bertram Lewis, *Classical Mythology and Arthurian Romance: A Study of the Sources of Chrétien de Troyes' 'Yvain' and Other Arthurian Romances* (London and New York: pub. for St. Andrews University by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1932). Although heavily influenced by Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and inaccurate in its emphasis on Greek sources—likely not available to romance writers in the Middle Ages aside from transmission through Latin adaptations and commentaries—Lewis's study points to an awareness of the possible medieval recombination of different traditions, classical and Celtic.
 4. See Edward L. Ridsen, ed., *Sir Gawain and the Classical Tradition: Essays on the Ancient Antecedents* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006). See especially Russel Rutter, "The Treason of Aeneas and the Mythographers of Vergil: The Classical Tradition in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," 30–48; Nicholas Haydock, "Treasonous Founders and Pious Seducers: Aeneas, Gawain, and Aporetic Romance," 82–111; E. L. Ridsen, "The 'Tresonous Tulk' in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," 112–120, who discovers parallels between the heroes Gawain and Odysseus and their narratives; and finally, Rosanne Gasse, "The Fierce Achilles in Chaucer, Gower, and the *Gawain* Poet," 121–135.
 5. K. Sarah-Jane Murray, *From Plato to Lancelot: A Preface to Chrétien de Troyes* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008).
 6. Concerning an anonymous twelfth-century elaborated Ovidian tale of "Narcisse" in the vernacular, see Martine Thiry-Stassin, "Une autre source ovidienne du Narcisse?" *Le Moyen Âge* 84 (1978): 211–226. For an extended study of both the *Narcisse* and the *Pyramus et Tisbé*, and Chrétien's adaptation of them in the *Lancelot*, see Murray, *From Plato to Lancelot*, esp. 218–252. Although Murray seems unaware of the mythographic commentary tradition and other pertinent criticism that anticipates some of her conclusions (see the following note), she does understand the complexity of *conjoincture* in the vernacular, particularly in Chrétien. Murray also discusses the impact of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* on *Erec* and *Enéide*, particularly the image of the wedding, in terms of *conjoincture*—drawing from Karl D. Uitti and Michelle Freeman in *Chrétien de Troyes Revisited*, Twayne's World Authors Series Revisited (New York: Twayne, 1995).

7. See Michelle Freeman, "Problem in Romance Composition: Ovid, Chrétien de Troyes and the *Romance of the Rose*," *Romance Philology* 30, no. 1 (August 1976): 158–168.
8. Michelle Freeman, *The Poetics of "Translatio Studii" and "Conjointure": Chrétien de Troyes's "Cligés"*, French Forum Monographs 12 (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1979).
9. See Jeanne A. Nightingale, "From Mirror to Metamorphosis: Echoes of Ovid's Narcissus in Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*," in *The Mythographic Art: Classical Fable and the Rise of the Vernacular in Early France and England*, ed. Jane Chance (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1990), 47–82. She analyzes previous scholarship on Ovid in Chrétien in 76–77 nn, in particular, studies by Foster E. Guyer, Jean Frappier, and Jean Dornbusch, and more general studies of Ovid in the Middle Ages by Edward Kennard Rand and Salvatore Battaglia.
10. See Martine Meuwese, "Inaccurate Instructions and Incorrect Interpretations: Errors and Deliberate Discrepancies in Illustrated Prose Lancelot manuscripts," *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société internationale arthurienne/Bibliographical bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* 54 (2002): 319–344; *King Arthur in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: In de Pelikaan, 2005); and, most recently, Nigel Morgan, Stella Panayotova, and Martine Meuwese, *Illuminated manuscripts in Cambridge: A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Cambridge Colleges* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, in conjunction with The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2009).
11. See the discussion of Évrart de Conty in Jane Chance, *Medieval Mythography*, vol. 3: *The Emergence of Italian Humanism, 1321–1475* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 225–244.
12. Évrart de Conty, *Le livre des eschez amoureux moralisés*, ed. Françoise Tesson-Guichard and Bruno Roy, Bibliothèque du moyen français 2 (Montreal and Paris: Ceres, 1993), 408; "The Chess of Love": Translation of a Prose Commentary on the 'Eschecs amoureux,'" trans. Joan Morton Jones (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1968), 640–641.
13. Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Daniel Poirion, with Anne Berthelot, Peter D. Dembowski, Sylvie Lefèvre, Karl D. Uitti, and Philippe Walter (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 515; Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler (London: Penguin, 1991), 211.
14. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 409; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 642.
15. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 410; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 642.

16. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 410; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 643.
17. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 411; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 644.
18. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 411; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 645.
19. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 411–412; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 646.
20. de Conty, *Les eschez amoureux moralisés*, 407; Jones, "The Chess of Love," 637.
21. Christine de Pizan, *Epistre Othea*, ed. Gabriella Parussa, *Textes littéraires français* (Paris: Droz, 1999), 209–210; *The Letter of Othea to Hector*, trans. Jane Chance (Newburyport, MA: Focus Information Group, 1990), 42–43.
22. "The Epistle of Othea to Hector": *Translated from the French into Middle English by Stephen Scrope*, ed. Curt F. Bühler, *Early English Text Society*, vol. 264 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 68 (fable 55, on the Gorgon).
23. Christine de Pizan, *Epistle of Othea to Hector*, 67; 14–16 (fable 5, on Perceval).
24. Christine de Pizan, *Epistle of Othea to Hector*, 14.
25. Christine de Pizan, *Epistle of Othea to Hector*, 15–16.
26. Pierre Bersuire, *De formis figurisque deorum*, chap. 1 of *Reductorium morale, liber XV: Ovidius moralizatus*, ed. Joseph Engels (Utrecht: Instituut voor Laat Latijn der Rijksuniversiteit, 1966), 1–2; trans. William Donald Reynolds, "The *Ovidius Moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius: An Introduction and Translation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1971), 33.
27. John of Garland [Johannes de Garlandia], *Integumenta Ovidii*, in *Integumenta Ovidii: Poemetto inedito del secolo XIII*, ed. Fausto Ghisalberti, *Testi e documenti inediti o rari*, no. 2 (Messina and Milan: Giuseppe Principato, 1933); *Integumenta Ovidii*, in "The *Integumenta* on the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid by John of Garland," ed. and trans. Lester Krueger Born (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1929), 5.244–246.
28. See the Third Vatican Mythographer, *De diis gentium et illorum allegoriis*, in *Scriptores rerum mythicarum Latini tres Romae nuper reperti*, ed. George Henry Bode (1834; repr. Hildesheim, Ger.: Georg Olms, 1968); and *The Vatican Mythographers*, trans. Ronald E. Pepin (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), respectively, 12.1–12.5, 13.4, and 14.1–14.4.

29. James Winny, ed. and trans. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Middle English Text with Facing Translation* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1992), Winny, *Sir Gawain*, 102 (line 1856).
30. Winny, *Sir Gawain*, 134, 135 (lines 2393–2394).
31. Winny, *Sir Gawain*, 132, 133 (lines 2363–2365).
32. William Vantuono, ed. and trans., *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 60 (Middle English) and 61 (modern English) (lines 749–751).
33. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1965), 3: 125 (lines 20,792–20,800); *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 341 (lines 20,821–20,829).
34. Lecoy, *Roman de la Rose*, 3: 133 (lines 21,053–21,058); Dahlberg, *Romance of the Rose*, 344 (lines 21,085–21,086). The stages of this myth of creation are traced in images 47–54 in Dahlberg, depicted in the text in lines 20,817, 20,836, 20,907, 20,937, 21,021, 21,059, 21,075, and 21,127.
35. Lecoy, *Roman de la Rose*, 3: 126, 134 (lines 20,821–20,822 and 21,079–21,086); Dahlberg, *Romance of the Rose*, 341 and 345 (lines 20,851–21,053 and 21,109–21,106).
36. Lecoy, *Roman de la Rose*, 3: 126 (lines 20,832–20,836); Dahlberg, *Romance of the Rose*, 341 (lines 20,860–20,865).
37. See Arnulf of Orleans [Arnulfus Aurelianensis], *Allegoriae super Ovidii Metamorphosin*, ed. Fausto Ghisalberti, In “Arnolfo d’Orléans: Un cultore di Ovidio nel secolo XII,” *Memorie del Reale Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* 24 (1917–1939): 155–234.
38. The Vulgate commentary on Ovid (ca. 1250) focuses primarily on the Creation Myth in book 1 and on the myths of human creativity in book 10—Orpheus, Pygmalion, and others. See Frank T. Coulson, *The “Vulgate” Commentary on Ovid’s “Metamorphoses”: The Creation Myth and the Story of Orpheus, Edited from Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, MS. 92* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies for the Centre for Medieval Studies, 1991). For a helpful general overview of medieval Ovid commentary (specifically, on the tenth book), see Kathryn McKinley, “The Medieval Commentary Tradition 1100–1500 on *Metamorphoses* 10,” *Viator* 27 (1996): 117–149.
39. See Fausto Ghisalberti, “Mediaeval Biographies of Ovid,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 19 (1946): 10–59 (here, 52, appendix j).

The fourteenth-century manuscript of Arnulf in which this *accessus* appears is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale français 8253.

40. See the discussion of Arnulf of Orleans (and Aristotle) in Jane Chance, *Medieval Mythography*, vol. 2, *From the School of Chartres to the Court at Avignon, 1177–1350* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 36 and 37.
41. Pierre Bersuire, *Reductorium morale, liber XV, cap. ii–xv: Ovidius moralizatus*, ed. Joseph Engels (Utrecht: Instituut voor Laat Latijn der Rijksuniversiteit, 1962), 152; “The *Ovidius Moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius: An Introduction and Translation,” trans. Reynolds, 355.
42. Bersuire, *Ovidius Moralizatus*, 152; trans. Reynolds, 356.
43. Winny, *Sir Gawain*, 138 and 140 (lines 2499 and 2509).
44. Lecoy, *Roman de la Rose*, 3: 126–127 (lines 20,843–20,849); Dahlberg, *Romance of the Rose*, 341 (lines 20,872–20,878).

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