

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Not only does the publication of Ovidian adaptations online increase public awareness of Ovid, but it also offers new material for research and pedagogical purposes. Consequently, in this thesis, I explore both the historical tradition of Ovidian adaptations, specifically adaptations of Ovid's Orpheus tale, and the modern presentation of Ovidian Adaptations online. In the first half of the thesis, I trace the thematic connections between historical and modern adaptations of Ovid's Orpheus myth. My analysis reveals that despite changes in form and medium, from printed poems to Internet video games, Ovidian adaptations return to Ovid's distinct thematic emphasis on exploring human passions and expressing an individual's emotional tensions through art. In the second half of the thesis, I focus on the pedagogical implications of locating Ovidian adaptations on the public space of the Internet. I contend that online adaptations offer educators the possibility of showing students interpretive models and of making student knowledge and experience central to learning in the classroom.

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Of Tales Changed to Other Forms: An Analysis of the Traditions and Future of
Ovidian Adaptations

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Shaleena Moy, Author

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OF TALES CHANGED TO OTHER FORMS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRADITIONS AND FUTURE OF OVIDIAN ADAPTATIONS

Introduction

The exiled Roman poet Ovid completed his poem *Metamorphoses*, a compilation of Roman myths in fifteen books, in AD 8 (Ovid X), and adaptations of stories from his *Metamorphoses* continue to be crafted today. In 2009, I came across my first student adaptation of an Ovidian myth on YouTube. In the course of my research this past year, I have encountered adaptations that retell Ovidian myths through popular songs, slide shows, legos, clay animation, video games, and homemade videos. This proliferation of Ovidian adaptations published on YouTube is not altogether surprising. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has been a popular text to adapt since the medieval period. In large part because of his themes dealing with human passions and the fickle nature of gods, fate, and the cosmic order, Ovid's versions of classic mythology seem to resonate throughout the centuries.

Modern online adaptations have evoked a variety of responses from viewers, including myself. The comments that viewers can and sometimes do choose to leave for the posters and other viewers are at times highly critical. In fact, I have found some of the most biting commentary has been left on web pages of Ovidian adaptations that demonstrate a deep understanding of the adapted text. Such comments, which usually result from a viewer's distaste for a costume or lack of singing talent, emphasize the potential for the content of an adaptation to be overshadowed by distracting creative decisions. At the same time, I have been

amazed at the fervent emotional responses to and appreciation for other Ovidian adaptations. Whether the audience raves about the adaptation or denounces it, what I find thrilling is that they are being exposed to Ovid in popular culture settings like YouTube. Even if some of the adaptations were created for a class, someone, often students, is choosing to publish the adaptations online. Not only does this increase familiarity with Ovid in popular culture, but it also opens these adaptations to the analytical scrutiny of any Internet user.

But as captivated as I have been by the adaptations posted online, I have been at least equally intrigued by the interactive web pages that host these adaptations. As a student, scholar, and educator, what continues to impress me is the potential for public Internet sites like YouTube to change the way Internet users engage, encounter, and respond to canonical literature outside academic spaces. These adaptations published online can also instigate action as well as discourse. Audiences can make comments, but they might also comment by creating their own “adaptations.” In one case, I found several players of an online video game adaptation had created music videos in response to the game.

This proliferation of Ovidian adaptation raises the question as to what an adaptation is and how we define and categorize adaptations. One of the most important questions about adaptation raised by the numerous adaptations posted online is the value of an adaptation. Historically, adaptations have been received and discussed as secondary, mere imitation, as less than an original source.¹

¹ Adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon acknowledges this shift in her book *A Theory of Adaptation* by using the term “adapted text” rather than source, primary, or original text.

Although there has been a scholarly shift away from this perception of adaptations as “secondary,” the adaptations published online make me wonder if online adaptations might continue to be undervalued. The adaptations published online are often independently produced with a distinctly homemade look. Yet, in chapter one, I contend that such adaptations are merely new extensions of the longer tradition of Ovidian adaptations, and in chapter two, I propose specific pedagogical uses for student-produced adaptations.

Another major issue an analysis of adaptations must contend with is the method for identifying a text as an adaptation. How do audiences know they are experiencing an adaptation? How much alteration defines an adaptation? While these are large questions that are endlessly debatable, I have found adaptation theorist Linda Hutcheon to be the most useful in addressing the idea of levels or degrees of adaptation. Her layered definition of adaptation offers at least two major categories of adaptation.

First, she acknowledges the broadest level of adaptation, which is any work that invokes a prior culturally significant work (Hutcheon 9). This means if I were to craft a narrative that at any point alludes to the story of two families that hate each other, but whose children fall in love and die tragically, I am adapting Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in the most general sense of adaptation. In the first section of chapter one, I will work with this broad definition of adaptation in order to give a brief overview of the long tradition of Ovidian adaptation without worrying about sifting through levels of adaptation.

However, as I ultimately want to analyze the survival of select themes in Ovidian adaptations, I shift to use Hutcheon's narrowed definition of adaptation in the latter sections of chapter one. Such an adaptation would maintain a more significant intertextual relationship with the adapted text (Hutcheon 8). An example of this level of adaptation would be the movie *Clueless*, which is an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*. *Clueless* reworks Austen's themes of a motherless matchmaking young woman who ultimately realizes how little she truly knows about life and love. In adaptations such as these, the adaptors not only re-tell the story, but they also re-work the story. Such reworking, the type that will be analyzed in this thesis, often brings the themes of the adapted text into a new, more modern context. These adaptations, because of the extended engagement with the adapted text, also allow audiences to perceive the adaptor's interpretation of the adapted text. This presentation of an interpretation and the continued emphasis on certain elements of Ovid's versions are the focus of analysis in this thesis.

The last major question I address in my thesis is how educators can use the online adaptations. From my research and analysis, I believe that the circulation of student-created adaptations in particular, on sites like YouTube, can provide educational tools for teaching Ovid in the classroom. To explore the possible use in the classroom, I look to the educational theory of critical pedagogy. Although critical pedagogy has much broader aims than this thesis attempts to address, I look specifically at one of the core tenets of critical pedagogy: the student-centered and dialogic classroom. The classroom critical pedagogy advocates makes the student voice, experience, participation, and knowledge as central to the classroom as the

educator. In the second chapter of this thesis, I further explain and explore this particular aspect of critical pedagogy's connection to the online Ovidian adaptations. Thus, the primary interest of the two chapters of this thesis is how non-commercial adaptations published online participate in the tradition of Ovidian adaptations and how student-produced Ovidian adaptations can be used in the classroom to further the dialogic aims of critical pedagogy.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I provide a brief overview of several key historical moments in Ovidian adaptations. Such an outline allows me to illustrate the way Ovidian themes remain constant although the medium, culture, and time periods adapting Ovid change drastically. After outlining the tradition of Ovidian adaptations, and of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in particular, I focus on Ovid's version of the Orpheus myth from Book X of his *Metamorphoses* to trace the persistence of elements from his stories in two specific Ovidian adaptations. Through a close reading of Milton's "Lycidas," first published in 1638, and of the video game *Don't Look Back*, published online in 2009 (Carpenter 61; Psychotronic), I demonstrate the consistency of Ovidian themes across time and mediums. The motive for adapting Ovid's version of Orpheus might be to fulfill an assignment or express the complexity of love, grief, and hope through an adaptation. However, regardless of the motivation, adapting Ovid and emphasizing his themes of human passion and the often-unpredictable possibility and inevitability of change affirms the resonance and relevance of his narratives. Furthermore, the very process and product of adaptation, the transformation of a text into a new text for a new time or medium, ensures the survival of the adapted text's most resonating themes for future audiences. Thus,

with the video game adaptation, I not only bring the Internet context into the discussion of Ovidian adaptations, but I also explore the possibility of a future for Ovid online that can be seen participating in the longer tradition of adapting Ovid in print.

In the second chapter, I continue focusing on Ovid's Orpheus myth and further narrow the topic to using student-produced Ovidian adaptations as both an assignment and a model for students. Creating Ovidian adaptations offers students the opportunity to actively construct their own meanings as they read. This active reading results in individual (or group) interpretations crafted by the students that shape the adaptation they ultimately produce. This process furthers the aims of critical pedagogy, which calls for a dialogic classroom that values the student voice and experience as well as the educator's voice and experience. The second half of chapter two goes on to propose that educators use existing student adaptations that currently circulate on YouTube as models of active reading and the interpretive process for students. This section of the thesis also highlights the potential for sites such as YouTube to model the social nature of literary studies and to encourage students to see themselves as valued participants in an interpretive community.

In the final pages of my conclusion, I return to look at the larger questions that prompted this study. By the close of the two chapters, I offer my own perspective on where Ovidian adaptations will continue appearing as we move through the twenty-first century. Additionally, I hope through the close readings of several online adaptations to demonstrate the potential such adaptations hold for Ovidian scholarship and Ovidian curriculum in literature classes. What I aim to offer

at the end is a bit of the hope that Ovid himself proffers at the close of one of his famous tales, the Orpheus myth. I have found, and I believe my readers will too, hope in the perseverance of, at least, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in a world where the Internet and countless narratives and distractions can be carried in a pocket.

Chapter One

From Scrolls to Pixels: Exploring Ovidian Adaptations from Medieval Tales to Online Video Games

Appreciation for Ovid's writings has varied dramatically in the last two millennia. However, one constant over the last two thousand years has been the thematic consistency in Ovidian adaptations. In this chapter, I focus on the way Ovid's representations of human passions and individual emotional tensions subvert the focus of his classical contemporaries, such as Virgil, on the social tensions of order, responsibility, accountability, and consequence. This thesis also has a specific interest in the adaptations of Ovid's Orpheus myth in the twenty-first century, which continue a long historical tradition in English literature of consciously and carefully reworking Ovidian themes of the individual and internal tensions. Ultimately, I argue that Ovid's emphasis on the emotional experience of individuals contributes greatly to the adaptability of Ovid's writings, and that adaptability is what has kept his work alive in the form of multi-media adaptations for the last two thousand years.

In order to get a sense of the consistency of Ovid's themes, I start this chapter by reviewing the tradition of Ovidian adaptations in English Literature. However, as adaptation is a complex and variably defined term, I want to preface my overview and analysis by pinpointing the two definitions of "adaptation" that I will be working with in this chapter. Of the many theories of adaptation available, I chose Linda Hutcheon for her acknowledgement and careful negotiation of "adaptation" as

“both a product and a process of creation and reception” (xiv). Adaptation is often difficult to define, and the question of what an adaptation is has many possible answers. One reason for the slippery nature of the word is the potential for the term to describe both a process, an action, and the product of that process. Furthermore, Hutcheon’s theory acknowledges that the process of adaptation is both an act of creation and reception. The adaptor is always engaging the adapted text even as he creates his own work. The adaptation as a product, then, is also a product not only of creation, but also of a critical reception on the part of the adaptors.

Additionally, I find Hutcheon useful for her language describing and definitions of adaptation. For instance, she offers the term “adapted text” rather than “source/original text.” As my project is centered on close analyses of adaptations, Hutcheon’s theory, with her emphasis on disrupting traditional perceptions of adaptations as secondary to or less than a greater original text, provides the language that reflects my interest in adaptations as valuable texts in their own right. Thus, in my own thesis, I employ Hutcheon’s more neutral “adapted text” to refer to Ovid’s work rather than “source,” “primary,” or “original.” Hutcheon also articulates a useful distinction between a broad and refined definition of “adaptation.” In the last third of this chapter, I narrow my definition of adaptation in order to focus on two adaptations of Ovid’s version of the Orpheus myth. In my analysis, I will work extensively with Hutcheon’s refined definition of adaptation, which requires not only a recognizable “adapted text,” but also a creative and interpretive use of the adapted text on a deeper level than allusion. However, for the first two thirds of the chapter, I will use the broadest sense of the term

adaptation, and Hutcheon defines this definition of adaptation as the most expansive and inclusive—almost anything that alters a text can be defined as adaptation (9). This broad and inclusive definition of adaptation allows me to look at the larger picture of Ovidian adaptation, which most scholarship begins chronicling in the Medieval period, without focusing on which level of adaptation a work fits.

It is during the Medieval period that Ovid's work is subject to the most revisionary adaptation. The majority of Medieval authors who adapted Ovid performed a revision of Ovid in the sense that they attempted to "re-vision" the base themes of sexuality and bestiality in Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* as serving a higher, moral purpose. The passions of humans and the pagan gods in the *Metamorphoses*, including bestiality, were viewed, in this tradition, as allegories for religious and moral truths. Consequently, the Middle Ages mark the first major period of moralizing and of English adaptations of the *Metamorphoses*. It was also in this period that the French adaptation of *Metamorphoses*, *The Ovide Moralise*, appeared. As Chaucer scholar Helen Cooper describes it, "*The Ovide Moralise*, the 70,000-line French octosyllabic version of the *Metamorphoses* composed in the early fourteenth century [brought] the task of Christianizing Ovid to its culmination" (Cooper 74). However, in this same period Chaucer, "The father of English Poetry,"² roots Ovidian themes in Western Literature through his own adaptations of Ovid. In

² So called by Sara Annes Brown in her book *The Metamorphosis of Ovid*. According to Brown, Chaucer was also the Medieval poet most "comfortable" adapting Ovid's work.

fact, Cooper claims that one need only turn to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*³ to see his adaptations reflecting his penchant for reworking, without moralizing, Ovidian themes. Remaining true to the spirit of Ovidian myths, Chaucer regales his readers with stories of desire, love, and anger. Thus the medieval period simultaneously represents a time of drastic revisions of Ovid through adaptation and the establishment of Ovidian themes as valuable and classical.

The next major period of reworking Ovid is the English Renaissance, which is known as a period of Ovidian translation as much as Ovidian adaptation. Scholars often mark the commencement of this moment in Ovidian adaptation as the publication of Arthur Golding's 1567 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*⁴ that, unlike most Medieval adaptations, did not focus on moralizing the myths.⁵ With his translation, as with George Sandy's later translation (in 1626),⁶ Golding increases accessibility to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by translating it from its original Latin into English. In fact, his translation was reprinted at least six times during Shakespeare's lifetime (Lerner 121). Golding's translation is also well known for its Anglicization of Ovid. JF Nims, the most recent editor of the Arthur Golding's

³ Cooper points to Chaucer's "Wife of Bath" as a prime example of Chaucer's adapting the spirit, as well as the tales, of Ovid's poetry (74).

⁴ The first translation of the *Metamorphoses* of this era is not actually thought to be an official one. Rather, it is a poem "thought to be the written by the secretary of an Earl, Thomas Howell (under the pseudonym T.H. (Lyne 34-35). Clearly the tradition of adapting Ovid is also one of private adaptations as well as publicly shared adaptations.

⁵ Even though moralizing was not the focus, Sara Annes Brown still describes Golding's translation as "a remnant of a tired Medieval moralizing tradition" (29-30).

⁶ Although Sandy's translation is written and published half a century after Golding's, Golding's translation remained the more popular translation (Lerner 121).

translation, describes Golding's translation process as "turning the sophisticated Roman into a ruddy country gentleman" (as qtd. in Lyne 27). Golding's translation in particular reminds scholars of how dependent modern readers are on translations as the adapted Ovidian text, for the number of adaptors able to fluently read Latin, if they can read it at all, has greatly declined in the last two millennia.

Though most modern audiences and adaptors of Ovid depend on translations to read Ovid, the process of translation is more complicated than merely finding the same words in a second language. Translators must also contend with differences in culture and with the relationship between the translated culture and the translating culture. According to translation theorist Tejaswini Niranjana, there are multiple avenues of translation—only the narrowest being a translation from one language to another. Other ways include taking into account cultural differences. The most significant influence of culture in translation is the relationship between the translating culture and the translated culture (as qt. in Lyne 11-12). For example, in the case of Ovid and the Elizabethans, the translated Roman culture (represented by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) was perceived as superior to the younger English culture. Thus the act of translating this classical work into the "inferior" English demystifies the classical work while simultaneously elevating English literature as having classical roots. This description of the translation process is in fact quite similar to the process of most adaptations published online discussed in this thesis: a culturally valued piece of literature undergoes an adaptation that ends with a relocation of the "high culture" into the popular culture medium of the Internet.

By the nineteenth century, however, negative perceptions of Ovid's biography precipitated a change in the way Ovid's writings were adapted. It was understood that he "suffered the final disgrace of exile for lewdness" (Vance 219), and he was reported to have had an affair with Julia, "the notoriously adulterous daughter of the Emperor Augustus" (Vance 218). This view of Ovid's place in Roman history resulted in his being labeled a "degenerate in a degenerate age, the frivolous author of the most immoral poem ever written" (216). Consequently, acknowledging Ovid as the creator of the adapted text became potentially damaging to the reputation of the adaptor. Scholar Norman Vance explains: "[Ovid's] bad reputation relegated him to the background. Only a rebel or a reprobate would want to identify too closely with him" (216). This nineteenth century moral response to Ovid the poet could be likened the Medieval response to Ovid's poetry. The two periods diverge, though, in their treatment of Ovid and his writing. Rather than moralizing Ovid's writing, nineteenth-century writers continued adapting Ovid's writing, his *Metamorphoses* in particular, while rarely explicitly citing his work as the adapted text.

Though Ovidian themes appeared in poetry despite nineteenth century resistance, this period makes tracing Ovidian influence more difficult, as many adapters in this period neglected to acknowledge Ovid. In this period, Ovid also takes a back seat to the many existing Ovidian adaptations of authors such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton (Vance 215). Vance explains that Ovid was not so much dismissed as he was, ironically, transformed "into a fountain from which wayfarers could drink without always recognizing the source. . . Poets, painters,

librettists all found in Ovid a useful imaginative resource which they seldom acknowledged" (231). This was possibly so easily done because as Sara Brown points out, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*' influences are often attributed to "general Greek Mythology;" however, she goes on to argue that though he did not invent the myths in their entirety, his versions and details are the ones that appeal to and resonate with western culture and literature (5-6). Ovid's preoccupation with passion, folly, and change makes his work a wellspring from which all writers can find some sustenance. Thus, while Ovid the poet dwelled in the dark corners of the nineteenth century, his poetry continued to be adopted and adapted by prominent writers of the Romantic period including Percy Shelley and Keats.

Perhaps as a result of the nineteenth century's resistance to Ovid's degenerate reputation, it has only been in the latter part of the twentieth century that a critical interest in Ovid and his work has re-emerged in the field of literature. In fact, the majority of the scholarship cited in this essay comes from the last forty years. Critical anthologies such as *Ovid Renewed* cover much of the same material presented in the last few pages in greater detail. And while whole books have been devoted to exploring the place of Ovid in the history of Western Literature, as previously mentioned, the majority of those books conclude with only a few pages devoted to analyzing how Ovidian adaptations can be seen operating in the current circulation of literature. Perhaps because these adaptations are still so recent, scholars only mention and briefly discuss modern translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, such as Ted Hughes' *Tales From Ovid*. Likewise, Michael Hofmann and James Lasdun's edited collection, *After Ovid: New Metamorphoses*, makes its way

into the short conversation as a book that offers modern readers forty plus poetic adaptations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The scholars I have come across focus primarily on Ovidian adaptations in the print medium, and make an almost abrupt claim, in comparison to the detail of the rest of their research, that Ovid inspires creative and multi-media (print as well as film) adaptations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In the rest of this chapter, I will focus on the way Ovidian themes of passion and individual emotions can be traced in specific adaptations. As the interest of this chapter is not only the survival of these themes, but also the adaptation of Ovid into new mediums, I will look at an adaptation in the print medium of poetry as well as a much more recent adaptation in the Internet medium of online video games. The specific Ovidian myth engaged in these adaptations is Ovid's Orpheus myth from Book X of his *Metamorphoses*, which itself has strong ties to Ovid's biography. The ur-Orpheus myth features a brilliant poet who dies young after being turned on by his audience. According to scholar Charles Segal, pre-Virgil "Orpheus embodies the power of music over animate and inanimate nature, its civilizing power and as an extension of its healing spell its ability to reach across the divide between life and death and even restore the dead to life" (155). Basically in this version, Orpheus was a symbol of the arts and music in particular, and the themes of this ur-myth are universal: life, death, and nature. Segal also describes a mystic undertone in this adapted myth that he articulates as "the healing spell." This reference to the music of the Orpheus as a "healing spell" is the first representation of a hopeful perception of the power of music. This is, as Segal articulates it, the myth that Virgil and later

Ovid rework according to their varying interests, and those points of deviation will be the focus of the next section.

Adapting Orpheus

In the remainder of this chapter, I focus on adaptations of the Orpheus myth. I will focus specifically on Ovid's story of Orpheus, which is itself an adaptation and which I will be referring to when I use the term "adapted text." The Orpheus myth that Ovid adapts in his *Metamorphoses* is about a brilliant young poet, the son of the muse Calliope. The tale opens with Orpheus' marriage to the nymph Eurydice who dies soon after their nuptials. In his version, Ovid focuses on Orpheus' descent into the underworld to retrieve Eurydice's spirit. Orpheus manages to convince Hades to release her, but breaks the one condition that he not look back until they have left the underworld. He loses her again and in his grief rejects the love of women. Ultimately he is torn to pieces by an enraged group of women.

According to Segal, this myth predates both Ovid and Virgil, the epic poet whose version Ovid adapted, and while many writers have taken on the task of adapting this myth, Virgil and Ovid's adaptations remain the most famous versions used as an "adapted text." Though both versions have been widely adapted, a survey of critical responses to their work reveals a clear hierarchy in academia and literary culture. The epic poet Virgil, with his focus on external tensions such as the cosmic order and social responsibility, typically emerges as the "greater" adapter of this poem. Ovid's version, by some accounts, parodies this version by refusing to work with the elegiac form and focusing so intently on individual emotions and

experience. However, there are some critics who have come to recognize that Ovid offers more than mere parody of Virgil, that his work does not, some have argued, “[render] Virgil’s work ‘emptied of content and impoverished’” (54). These critics appreciate Ovid’s adaptation as a valuable text in its own right, rather than seeing it as a less meaningful, secondary adaptation of Virgil. The very thematic and formal shifts in Ovid’s version that some have seen as parody or critique are the Ovidian themes and structures that I argue adapters find so appealing in his writing.

In order to establish how Ovid’s adaptation diverges from Virgil, I begin with Segal’s recounting of Virgil’s adaptation of the myth in the fourth book of his *Georgics*, for it is Virgil’s formal elegy, centered on social responsibility and cosmic order, that Segal posits Ovid reworks. Virgil’s version focuses not only on Orpheus as an artist, but also emphasizes issues of cosmic order and social responsibility that Ovid’s version does not dwell on. For example, Virgil’s version focuses on the language of penalty. One such moment is when a “sudden frenzy seized Orpheus” and broke “the ruthless tyrant’s pact” (Virgil 253). His frenzied love leads Orpheus to commit an error and break his pact. As punishment, Orpheus loses Eurydice once more, and she vanishes immediately after despairing over her second death (Virgil 255). Another major difference between Ovid and Virgil’s versions of the Orpheus myth is Virgil’s use of the character Aristaeus, who Ovid excludes entirely. Aristaeus chases Eurydice, and as she runs away from him she does not see the danger represented by the snake when the snake fatally bites her. Consequently, the initial death of Eurydice, in Virgil’s poem, is the fault of Aristaeus (Virgil 251). Thus with Aristaeus, Segal argues that Virgil adds, to his representation of cosmic order, issues

of social and moral responsibility (Segal 42; 25). Virgil also places a great deal of weight on the natural order of human error and resulting consequences/punishments. For instance, Segal points out the inexorability of the decree that Orpheus shall not look at Eurydice in Virgil's version. When Orpheus does look back, a "threefold thunder" announces the broken decree (Segal 60-61). In Virgil's version, "Orpheus. . . has violated firmly fixed *foedera* and there is no further recourse. He pays the price of his *furor*" (Segal 61). Segal draws out the emphasis Virgil places on Orpheus' error and the dramatic enactment of the punishment. As thunder booms, Eurydice fades away, and Orpheus clings to "empty shadows" (61-62). These passages and descriptions surrounding the inflexibility of the law and the swiftly carried out punishments for breaking the law further illustrate Virgil's focus on order and social responsibility.

In his reworking of Virgil's highly formal and ordered representation of the Orpheus myth, Ovid makes an important move away from the logical cosmic order that Virgil illustrates. Ovid subverts the rigidity of Virgil's poetic world and establishes a world with "no sure and stable divine order, or, if there is, its orderliness and objectivity are highly questionable" (Segal 55-56). For instance, Ovid excludes the character Aristaeus, and with him the issues of moral and social responsibility as well as an obvious cause and effect cosmic order. He also softens Orpheus' punishment for breaking the pact by ultimately allowing the two spirits, Orpheus and Eurydice, to reunite after Orpheus dies. However, far from this move making Ovid's adaptation "empty of content and impoverished," Ovid's subversive adaptation confronts the distasteful possibility that there is no divine order and that

if one exists, humans cannot and will not always benefit from that order. In Ovid's adaptation, this chaotic and fluid world of passion and change can, however, offer hope and meaning through art. The hope rises from Ovid's "happy" ending when the shades of Eurydice and Orpheus are reunited. Ovid also offers hope through the continuation of the art of poetry after the poet Orpheus dies, as evidenced by the succession of poems following the death of Orpheus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Thus, even as Ovid's Orpheus myth deals with the issue of cosmic order, the human passions experienced by an individual—internal tensions—are central to the story.

Ovid's thematic changes also shift the focus from social responsibility and cosmic order to the human passions expressed and reflected through art. Orpheus, as an acclaimed poet, empowers his music with his love and grief. As Segal explains, with this emphasis on the individual and human passion, Ovid "seeks to vindicate individual sentiment and the individual emotional life" (Segal 55). Though he privileges the individual and emotional, I still read Ovid's central themes of love and music as saying that the power of love is amplified by the power of art, music for Orpheus specifically. For in Ovid's adaptation, the joining of powerful emotions and music makes the music, as representative of art, powerful. In Ovid's version, Hades releases Eurydice only after Orpheus speaks of the strength of his love and then sings "to the music of his strings. . . And all the bloodless spirits wept to hear" (X.12-13). Orpheus' love, grief, and music combined are powerful enough that he receives the chance to bring his love back to life. In Virgil's version, much less time is spent describing and establishing the triumph of Orpheus' love and music to grant the possibility of reviving Eurydice. As Segal describes it, Ovid's version "[brings]

together man's capacity for love and his capacity to deal with loss and death through the expressive power of art" (193). For it is only through his art that Orpheus' love can persuade Hades. Although the poet's music does eventually fail him when he is torn apart by crazed women, his still singing lyre and murmuring head floating down the river seem to indicate the inability of art to be killed even if the physical embodiment of it, Orpheus, can be destroyed. This continuation of art in the absence of artist can even be seen in the way the nineteenth century treated the poet Ovid—keeping his work alive, but, for the most part, shunning the poet himself. It also mirrors the conclusion of the Orpheus myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the poet dies, but Ovid's poem goes on even as the poem and nature lament the death of a beloved poet. In fact, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*Met.*) continues for five more books after the death of Orpheus, the poet and sometimes narrator of the *Met.*, at the beginning of Book XI.

Like poetry in Ovid's account of Orpheus, and in the *Metamorphoses* in general, the Orpheus myth lives on long after the poets who have adapted it have died, and it remains a popular tale to adapt—by artists across mediums and cultures. In the twentieth century, in particular, the myth has survived through adaptations by artists representing multiple genders and mediums. For instance, critically acclaimed and popular writers such as Tennessee Williams, Adrienne Rich, and Margaret Atwood have adapted Orpheus as a play and as poems. In a successful adaptation to new media, the myth also made several film appearances in the twentieth century. In 1949, French director Cocteau unveiled his *Orphée*, which was released in English as *Orpheus* in 1950. *Black Orpheus* appeared in 1958, also by a

French director Marcel Camus. Finally, in 1991, the myth appeared on HBO, later on DVD and YouTube, as part of the series *The Storyteller*. What I look at, in the next and last section of this chapter, is how Ovid's Orpheus, because of its emphasis on both art and human passion, serves as the adapted text that inspires modern artists to rework the Orpheus myth for their audiences.

Ovid, Milton, and Cavanagh: Three Adapters Across Two Thousand Years

In this final section, I further narrow the scope of this chapter to two specific examples of adaptations of the Orpheus myth that I contend are extended Ovidian adaptations, in Hutcheon's narrower sense of adaptations. I will be working with Milton's "Lycidas" and an online video game created by Terry Cavanagh titled *Don't Look Back*, as prime examples that demonstrate the adaptability of Ovidian themes across medias and cultures. A significant commonality between these two adaptations is the subtlety of their extended intertextual engagement with Ovid's version of Orpheus. These adaptations do not announce an Ovidian influence. However, my close reading of the adaptation "products" will reveal how their adaptation "process" interweaves an act of creation with an act of reception. Even more specifically, my analysis will explore the Ovidian themes that Milton and Cavanagh both approach as readers and rework as creators.

In order to analyze the reworking of Ovidian themes in various mediums and time periods, I narrow my definition of adaption to those with an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted text. In addition to working with a refined definition of adaptation, I will also consider the relationship between

medium and audience engagement, and so I will begin this section by further describing the more specific definition of adaptation employed throughout the rest of this chapter. From there I move on to describe briefly the effect medium has on an adaptation. Finally, through my analysis of these two adaptations, I will explore the way Ovidian themes can be traced in adaptations across time, cultures, and mediums.

My definition of adaptation in the last section of this chapter shifts as I hone in on adaptations that have a significant intertextual relationship with the adapted text. Thus far, I have been using the broadest definition of “adaptation”—any text that incorporates and alters another text—in order to illustrate the larger picture of Ovidian and Orpheus adaptations (Hutcheon 9). However, in order to conduct my close textual analysis in this last third of the chapter, I will be defining adaptation as 1) “An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works”; 2) “A creative and interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging”; and 3) “An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” (Hutcheon 8). To fit this definition, an adaptation must incorporate a creative reading of a recognizable “other work” as a *significant* component of the adaptation. The “extended intertextual engagement” is the criterion that significantly limits the number of adaptations that actually fit this definition of adaptation.

The adaptor’s chosen medium is also crucial to my discussion of the adaptability of Ovidian themes. For different mediums are accompanied, so Hutcheon argues, by varying modes of engagement an audience experiences with an adaptation. Hutcheon identifies three modes of engagement that typically

accompany specific mediums. The first mode of engagement is “telling,” and Hutcheon gives the examples of novels and short stories (poems would also fit here) as the mediums in which this mode of engagement typically occurs (xiv). The second mode of engagement she explains is “showing”; her examples of mediums that show audiences are “all performance media” (xiv). That would include plays, films, and recorded plays. The final mode of engagement, according to Hutcheon, is one that permits us “to interact physically and [most crucially]⁷ kinesthetically with them (as in video games or theme parks)” (xiv). The adaptor’s choice of medium determines the mode of audience engagement. Which mode of engagement an adaptor chooses might, in fact, depend on the adaptor’s engagement and purpose in reworking the text.

In the very last part of this chapter, I will be working with a video game, which invokes the “interacting” mode of engagement. If Cavanagh wants to offer his audience a cathartic experience, which player comments indicate his game does, then the medium of video game, with its interactive mode of engagement, best reflects that purpose. However, the first adaptation that I analyze is a Milton poem, which reworks Ovidian themes and subversion in the traditional medium of poetry. In this example of an adaptation process, Milton chooses a “telling” medium. Since Milton, arguably, wants to use his elegy make an announcement to his audience—even though King is dead, I am a poet and I will continue writing—then his choice of poetry for his medium, which engages the audience through the telling mode, would fit his purposes nicely. Thus medium is a critical artistic choice made by adaptors in

⁷ Brackets indicate my added emphasis.

their adaptation process that determines the audience's mode of engagement with the adaptation product.

Milton's poem "Lycidas" is unquestionably an adaptation of the Orpheus myth, in Hutcheon's broadest definition of the term in that it at least alludes to the Orpheus myth, but it is also a poem that exemplifies the exclusive quality of Hutcheon's refined definition of adaptation. However, this may not be immediately obvious, for some scholars have pointed to Milton's "Lycidas" as an example of a poem that only adapts the Orpheus myth at the level of allusion because Milton makes only one direct reference to the Orpheus myth. However, I posit that a close reading of the imagery in and biographical context of Milton's poem reveals that his elegy carries out an "extended intertextual engagement" with the Orpheus myth, and specifically incorporates elements of Ovid's adaptation of that myth.

Though I read a distinctly Ovidian influence in Milton's "Lycidas," its form, the pastoral elegy, would suggest that Milton had Virgil's elegiac version of Orpheus in mind. Milton wrote the elegy "Lycidas" for fellow poet and college mate Edward King, who had recently drowned (Trent 60). However, Milton's relationship with King was complicated by the fact that King was promoted to the position of fellow at Christ's College over Milton, who had been expected to achieve that position (Trent 60). Furthermore, scholars like William Trent note describe only a causal friendship between King and Milton (60). This biographical context leads me to question the sincerity of Milton's mourning. If, due to King's usurpation of the position Milton earned, Milton did not mourn King's passage with the fervor his poem indicates, then his dramatic elegy lamenting the death of a most revered and talented poet

feels excessive. This ironic excess of formal emotion, presented through the elegiac form, more closely echoes Ovid's reworking of Virgil's serious invocation of elegy and order, rather than Virgil's actual elegy.

As further evidence for Ovid's influence, I read the single *direct* reference to the Orpheus myth as a moment where Milton incorporates Ovidian themes of internal crises and chaotic cosmic order. On lines 58-63 of "Lycidas" the narrator asks,

What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament,
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

This allusion to "Orpheus" is part of the narrator's question of responsibility for the poet's death. Immediately preceding this recap of Orpheus' death, Milton's narrator laments the abandonment of his poet friend by the Nymphs: "Had ye been there—for what could that have done?" (Milton Line 57). The Orpheus story serves, then, to absolve any absent friends of guilt resulting from inaction. Again, this deviates from Virgil's starkly cosmically ordered world of action and consequence or inaction and consequence. Were this a poem in the vein of Virgil's adaptation, the nymphs would be guilty of abandonment and that abandonment would be explained as the direct cause of the consequent death of the poet. However, in Milton's poem, as in Ovid's, the world is not ordered, nor is tragedy so easily explained. Milton's poem reflects

the Ovidian perspective that one may have been able to intervene, but the possibility that nothing could be done by any person is just as likely. Where Virgil offers readers the reassurance that bad things happen as a result of transgression, Ovid and Milton disabuse their readers of that security. With his emphasis on the unpredictability of life and the power and triumph of art combined with passion, and taking into account the biographical context, Milton's "Lycidas" displays a strong affinity with Ovid's version of the Orpheus myth from the *Metamorphoses*.

Still, Milton's reference to Orpheus in "Lycidas" has been used to argue the poem is an adaptation of allusion rather than an adaptation in Hutcheon's more refined sense. However, I contend that even before that explicit reference, Milton invites the reader to think of Orpheus. In fact, Milton's "Lycidas" opens with an image that is vividly reminiscent of the Orpheus myth. The speaker laments the death of the poet Lycidas, and on lines eight to twelve, clear biographical parallels are drawn between Orpheus and Lycidas (King):

For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
 Himself to sing and build a lofty rhyme,
 He must not float upon his watery bier

The description of the unparalleled poet who has died before his time reminds readers of that other famous poet, Orpheus, who was killed without just cause in the prime of his life. Perhaps even more compelling is the line "He must not float upon his watery bier" (Line 12). King, for whom Milton writes the poem, drowned, but

the verb “float” and description of the “watery bier” invokes the image of Orpheus’ decapitated head floating down the river, his own “watery bier” (Ovid XI. 46-47). Milton goes on to declare the depth to which Lycidas should be mourned, just as Ovid goes to some length to describe the tears of even the river that swelled with its grief (Ovid XI. 42-43). This reading points to a sustained intertextual engagement between “Lycidas” and Ovid’s version of Orpheus that extends beyond the direct reference.

Milton also seems to engage with the Orpheus myth, and Ovid’s version in particular in the hope offered to the reader in the final stanza of “Lycidas.” In the final eight lines of his poem, Milton offers his readers a hopeful ending in the survival of the poetic art even in the loss of the poet himself. The shepherd singing in the elegy rises as the sun descends for its daily rest; he is leaving this spot and this sorrow: “To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new” (Line 193). The great poet is gone, but even in the process of conveying his death, the art that he represented lives on and moves on. Basically Milton reassures his audience that the poetic art will not reside forever in death with the great poet Lycidas (representing King). This is the transcendent hope of art. The art finds a new embodiment in the form of this shepherd/poet who moves on at the end. Moving back to the biographical parallels, this poet taking over at the end is Milton himself, the singer of the death of Lycidas/King. In a structural echo of the *Metamorphoses*, in which Ovid moves seamlessly into another myth after the death of Orpheus, Milton tells the reader through the shepherd/poet that his poetry will go on after grief to find new locations and new inspirations.

A millennium and a half after the *Metamorphoses*, Milton reworks Ovid's Orpheus adaptation, and with "Lycidas" Milton, crafts his own, potentially subversive, poetic adaptation. Milton's adaptation invokes the same themes of individual grief, the power and hope found in art, and the often inexplicable and chaotic cosmic order Ovid established in his version of Orpheus. These themes of human suffering and expressive art are what make Ovid's writings so appealing that they continue inspiring artists even now in the twenty-first century. The emphasis on the combination of human passion and great art resulting in a powerfully moving force makes Ovid's Orpheus myth even more compelling for artists seeking to convey passions, experiences, or messages through their own art. Though I turn now to a new medium and the "interaction" mode of engagement, in the form of an online video game, these same themes persist at the core of Cavanagh's adaptation of the Orpheus myth. I believe it is this ability of Ovidian themes to translate so effectively into divergent medias that keeps Ovid's adaptation alive and relevant.

For the remainder of this chapter, I will analyze Terry Cavanagh's online video game *Don't Look Back* in order to trace the continuation of those Ovidian themes in twenty-first century new media adaptations. In order to analyze Cavanagh's *Don't Look Back*, I want to review the potential and limitations of the video game medium as it is a relatively new medium that has begun to adapt Classical literature.⁸ Here, I use the video game theory (video games convey narrative through minor first and third acts, while a second action act is the focus of

⁸ In addition to this video game, a commercial video game based on Dante's *Inferno* was released in 2010.

the game) Hutcheon offers for analyzing a video game in order to direct my analysis of the video game *Don't Look Back*.

Though I am using Hutcheon's theoretical framework, I am analyzing an indie, non-commercial/private created, video game with a classical poem as its adapted text. Hutcheon, on the other hand, focuses on commercial adaptations and looks specifically at the relationship between films and video games. The adapted text's setting, or in Hutcheon's theory the film's setting, has a significant influence on the adaptations' setting. According to Hutcheon, modern video games often have flashy settings and reproduce entire worlds first introduced in a film (14). In these very visual worlds, Hutcheon asserts the narration "is no longer central or at least no longer an end in itself" (13). It is about the action. She outlines the video game experience in three parts or acts, as she calls them: introduction, gameplay, and climax. Hutcheon describes acts one and three as doing the narrative work, while the second act "moves the narrative along through visual spectacle and audio effects (including music) and through problem solving challenges" (13). According to Hutcheon, the second act is the core of the experience, requiring intense "cognitive and physical engagement" (13). In this scenario the game would be what mattered. The narrative is merely the vehicle that drives the player through the main event: challenges, moves, and action. But what if this isn't the case? What if there are video games that prioritize the narrative as much as the action? The game *Don't Look Back* proves that such games can exist, and that it can not only attract players, but also provoke its players to respond to the narrative as well as the action.

Overall, Hutcheon makes a compelling case that I agree with, but I find the final argument she makes about the limitations of the video game medium puzzling. In a comparison between the medium that tells and the one that asks its audience to interact with the adaptation, she posits that “what videogames, like virtual reality experiments, cannot easily adapt is what novels can portray so well: the ‘res cogitans,’ the space of the mind” (14). Hutcheon explains that video games cannot tell you what is in the character’s mind: players cannot see the thoughts and feelings that a writer can “tell” his readers, and Hutcheon is absolutely correct. However, what must also be considered is that the video game asks its players instead to *experience* those emotions, to *think* those thoughts. I pause here because the very capability of the video game to induce the feelings within the player, rather than to merely describe the feelings to the reader, is a compelling strength of the video game medium. *Don't Look Back* offers players a mode of engagement through which the Ovidian themes—the feeling of intense love and grief, the power of music and art—become personal. Players are asked to make decisions and experience the narrative in a way that inspires a sense of agency.

This interactive mode of engagement becomes powerful because by allowing the player to make so many choices, to experience so much, the game is constantly demanding that players interpret and think about the narrative. The adaptor’s ability to offer those choices, such as starting over, looking back, or killing monsters, to the player will depend on the adaptor’s understanding of the adapted text, the medium, and their target audience. Admittedly, not all games will capitalize on the ability of the video game to use the interactive nature of the medium to make

players interpret and reflect on the narrative, but Cavanagh's *Don't Look Back* is at least one video game that I have discovered whose players consistently remark, in comments on the web page hosting the game, upon the ability of the game to make them think about the narrative of the game.

Cavanagh's adaptation is atypical in ways that go beyond its Classical subject matter. His adaptation makes its first break from the standard modern video game, as described by Hutcheon, in its refusal to rely on flashy special effects or distracting visuals.⁹ The fantasy world Cavanagh presents is far from flashy. The setting is usually a black screen with basic and dull colors. Still, Cavanagh offers his players a more personal game, one that refuses to distract the player with snazzy special effects and screens that look like they came out of a movie. In *Don't Look Back*, it is the player, the player's skill with the keys, and the narrative to which the stark setting draws attention. Players act out a mission to save their lost love from the underworld, not a mission to save New York City from terrorists. Of course, the adaptor makes some anachronistic choices, such as giving Orpheus a handgun, but, overall, the game manages to focus on the human passions driving the character and compels the players to face the inevitability of death, loss, and uncertainty. The sparseness of the game highlights the internal themes Ovid makes paramount in his adaptation of the Orpheus myth.

To begin looking at the game through Hutcheon's three acts (introduction, gameplay, and climax), the introduction does surprisingly little to impart the

⁹ The game was created by Terry Cavanagh, but because the game is located on a site that is reviewing it, the citations for this game are under the name of the author of the review: Psychotronic.

narrative. The biggest clue players have about the narrative is the title, *Don't Look Back*, and the fact that they are standing over a grave. Even if they do not immediately realize the connection to the Orpheus myth, they recognize that their character is mourning someone, and has only one productive choice, to walk away from the grave. The character can look backwards, and move backwards at this point with no apparent penalty, just the loss of momentum in the game, and so the player continues moving to the right on the screen until the grave is out of sight. Two screens, a cliff drop, and a snake battle later (fortunately for the unskilled the player has unlimited lives) the avatar picks up a handgun.

The second act has officially begun, and the player blasts his way through obstacles only to find the avatar seems determined to descend. By the second cliff the avatar fights his way to and leaps from, the player should be having a bad feeling. When the player sees a third cliff, *déjà vue* creeps over him and bells start clanging. In case the player is still not clear on the avatar's destination, four black screens of falling later should make it clear that the completely black setting the avatar lands in is Hell. From this point on the player is fully engaged in the mini battles with snakes, bats, three-headed dogs, an assortment of other villains, and the final enemy. As in Milton's adaptation, the imagery Cavanagh uses explicitly invokes the Orpheus myth. Cavanagh manages to incorporate all of the villains from the Orpheus myth into his game such as the three-headed dog, snakes, and the Hades character, and, if the player is at all familiar with the Orpheus myth, the title and this first half of the video game clarify the objective that the game never explicitly states.

Though the player is only halfway through the game at this point, the battles stop after the avatar picks up a ghostly figure. Even though the game still has quite a few screens left, the third act has started with the acquisition of the spirit. This is in line with Hutcheon's theory that the third act functions to move the narrative along. However, it differs from Hutcheon's examples, where the second act takes up the majority of the game rather than less than half, in the emphasis the game places on the third act that resolves the narrative. In Hutcheon's outline, the narrative acts (the first and third) are secondary to the action of the second act, the main event. The third act is really just the climactic moment where the narrative is resolved. *Don't Look Back*, as an adaptation of the Orpheus myth, however, does not conclude the narrative when the character finally earns back the spirit of his loved one. At this point the character begins retracing his steps with the ghost following behind. Each time the character looks back even for an instant the ghost sighs and disappears, and the player loses a life. The game resets to the place where the player died, and the avatar, once more, is compelled to move only in one direction, back the way he came. The trip back involves some fancy maneuvering, but requires no gunfights. It is mostly a race to get the spirit back to the grave. This alteration of the typical emphasis on action illustrates the significant role the narrative plays in Cavanagh's video game adaptation of Orpheus. The game is as much, if not more, about experiencing the frustrations and hope of Ovid's tale of Orpheus as it is about killing bad guys.

When the avatar finally reaches the starting point, the player is confronted with the same screen the game began with. The player essentially returns to see his

character still standing over the grave. For a moment all three figures remain stuck. The player has no control over the avatar that now appears, itself, to be an apparition like the one he just rescued. After a few seconds both the rescued spirit and the avatar dissolve and the game resets. The player is left wondering whether the avatar died or if it was all the fantasy of the character standing over the grave. In the end, the player finds himself confronted with yet another choice: accept the ending or play again. In player comments, the possibility that a player who plays a “perfect game” with no deaths might somehow save and keep his ghostly companion arises several times. However, to my knowledge, from reading all comments I have found, this theory remains untested, and players continue to watch the ghostly avatars dissipate before the game resets to the initial grave scene.

This adaptation strives to emphasize the grief and power of love through its ambiguous ending. At the same time, while the game does not attribute the character’s success to his music, very affecting music does play in the background intermittently. In fact, the game is played mostly in silence. Consequently, the effect of the dramatic music is enhanced when it plays during the avatar’s confrontation with the final enemy. For the purposes of the medium, having the character win back his love with music, as Orpheus does, would not work, but the creator does the next best thing, he saves the most dramatic music for the two major battles. When the enemy is defeated, the music fades again to an underlying beat until the character makes his first ascent with the ghost following. This strategic use of music both heightens the intensity of the battle and, for audiences familiar with the myth, reminds players of the importance of powerful music to success.

The cryptic conclusion of the game is also an interpretation of the issue of love or art crossing the boundaries of death. The adaptation's ending re-enforces the natural order of life and death—the dead cannot be brought back to life—even as it makes the boundaries between life and death fluid and crossable. No matter how patient, strong, loving, or powerful one is, the dead cannot be brought back to life. Neither art, nor a gun can force the dead back in to the realm of the living, and as the game resets, the player must make a choice. Players either accept that reality and move on or they play again hoping that if they can play the perfect game, there might be a different ending.

With its ambiguous ending the game both offers an interpretation of Ovid's myth and invites players to interpret the narrative of the game. One might even read the ending as adhering to Ovid's adaptation in which the two shades, Orpheus and Eurydice, are united in the end. The game also expresses the importance of art, music, by not overplaying the soundtrack. In the avatar's most difficult battles the music energizes the player and intensifies the moment. The love, the grief, the power of art to temporarily reanimate a lost love, and the occasional senselessness are all themes Cavanagh lifts directly from Ovid's Orpheus myth.

These are also the themes that Milton reworks in "Lycidas," and it is this subtle engagement with Ovidian themes and imagery that mark these adaptations as fitting Hutcheon's refined theory of adaptation. Here I return to Hutcheon's defining of adaptation as both a process and a product of creation and reception. For not only can we see the ways Milton and Cavanagh crafted their own versions of the Orpheus myth, but we also glimpse their interpretation/reception process of the

Orpheus myth, and of Ovid's version in particular. With both adaptations the audiences witness the adaptors' process of working through grief and of working through Ovid's representation of grief. This process of interpretation and creation produces individual adaptations that reflect the adapter's unique experience with the text. The adaptation as a shared response to the adapted text can, in fact, invite the audience to respond to the adaptation. For example, the Internet context for an adaptation lends itself to a responsive relationship, and some players of Cavanagh's game post links to their own video responses to *Don't Look Back*. Although the print medium that Milton worked in does not have as immediate and widely accessible a response structure, the very act of adapting has generated responses long before the Internet came into being. Thus while the medium, time period, and culture of these two adaptations vary wildly, the Ovidian themes resonate through these differences—connecting these adaptations with each other and with Ovid's Orpheus myth.

Ovidian adaptations, including Orpheus adaptations, have a long tradition of being reworked, but what becomes clear through this historical overview and analysis is that particular Ovidian themes remain constant and are arguably the point of access for adapters and audiences. Throughout Ovidian adaptations from the Medieval period, the Renaissance, the nineteenth century, and the twenty-first century, Ovid's emphasis on the human passions and the individual's internal tensions persist through cultural, time, and medium translations. And the question of where Ovid adaptations are going in the future is answered, in part, by Cavanagh's adaptation.

The twenty-first century welcomes Ovid's adaptations to the Internet, and in the next chapter, I will discuss the way Ovidian adaptations can have a transgressive function, through an online presence and the "showing" mode of engagement, in the classroom.

Chapter 2

Transforming the Classroom: Teaching Ovid's Orpheus, Adaptation, and YouTube

Ovid's thematic emphasis on the power of art, the individual, and the internal has been influential in the last two millennia of Western literature. Ovid's work also has a long history of educational use. Since at least the sixteenth century his work has been, most commonly, used as a text through which students learn to read and write Latin (Ganss).¹⁰ Though many still use his poems to teach Latin, excerpts from his *Metamorphoses* and love poems are also currently taught in middle school through college literature classrooms. As the examples of Ovid assignments discussed in this chapter show, teaching the much-adapted Ovid provides an opportunity for literature teachers to ask their students to be creative in their engagements with the text. The interpretive moves that creative assignments potentially make visible and the way these examples of student interpretations can be used to model engagement and interpretation in the classroom are the foci of this chapter.

This chapter examines the role Ovid's adaptable poems can and do play in the literature classroom as a potential site of critical pedagogy. Specifically, over the course of this chapter, I explore and explain how Ovid's themes, which privilege the individual, art, and love, in his version of the Orpheus myth (a poem in Ovid's subversive¹¹ and highly adaptable *Metamorphoses*), not only already lend

¹⁰ Texts such as *Latin Via Ovid* are still popular today. *Latin Via Ovid*, in particular, is marketed as a self-teaching text.

¹¹ The subversive nature refers to the history of Ovidian adaptations and the poet discussed in the previous chapter. The subversive nature of Ovid can be seen developing most explicitly in the treatment of Ovid in the nineteenth century when

themselves to alternative teaching methods, but also have the potential to facilitate new non-traditional teaching methods that would further the aims of critical pedagogy.

In short, the interest of this chapter is two-fold. The first half of the chapter examines an existing teaching strategy, in which educators have asked students to create an adaptation of a text—specifically of an Ovidian myth. Here, I will analyze how the assignment allows instructors to see the students' interpretation materialized in a short film. By analyzing the students' interpretive process in a student adaptation, I will show how this film functions as a model of student engagement. My analysis describes the way viewers of this film can see students actively reading and engaging the assigned Ovidian text. The second half of this chapter explains the motivations and methods of my pedagogical proposition: to re-introduce select student adaptations into the classroom as texts to be analyzed by students and teachers. My proposition addresses the issue of convincing students that they are capable of actively reading and engaging the text, rather than merely assimilating a teacher's interpretation. The "select" student-produced adaptations I advocate using in the classroom are those that have been published on YouTube. I further suggest that these student adaptations should, in fact, be shown to students from the YouTube site, a popular media context that highlights the students as creators of these adaptations.

I want to establish the tenet of critical pedagogy this chapter engages as the chapter ultimately concludes that incorporating YouTube into the classroom will

admitting an association with the poet was an act of rebellion, and, while appropriation of his work continued, he often remained an uncited source.

further the aim of critical pedagogy. One of the most well-known concerns of critical pedagogy is the development of a critical consciousness, which is seen as a necessary first step in “[challenging] and [transforming] oppressive social conditions” (“What is Critical Pedagogy”). However, in this thesis, I focus on the core tenet of critical pedagogy that calls for a “dialogic classroom,” which is integral to that development of a critical consciousness (Lindquist and Seitz 126). Paulo Freire, a founding figure of critical pedagogy, has argued that an obstruction to active reading and writing instruction is the traditional teacher monologic narration (Freire). Establishing critical pedagogy’s dialogic classroom demands the disruption of the teacher’s monologic narration (Lindquist and Seitz 126). This disruption, proposed by critical pedagogy theorists, leads to the evolution of the classroom into a space where dialogue, based on both teacher and student experiences, results in new knowledge (“What is Critical Pedagogy”). Essentially, instead of the teacher being the only source of knowledge from whom the students seek to learn, critical pedagogy recognizes that students bring funds of knowledge from which teachers and other students can learn. Critical Pedagogy scholar Cathy Glenn would identify this modified classroom discourse as student-centered dialogue “that focuses on the students’ experiences, identities, and lifeworlds” (758). The students become active participants in this classroom, and their funds of knowledge can both inform the classroom discourse as well as be the subject of the discourse. The student adaptations discussed in this chapter are examples of an existing assignment that reflect student-centered dialogue by valuing student voices and bringing student knowledge, experience, and identity into the classroom. As students complete the

assignment of producing their own adaptations of Ovid's works, they also become active participants who do more than reverentially imitate or absorb the teacher's reading of the Ovidian text. Students become interpreters and active readers of the text.

The idea that students actively engage the texts they read is, unfortunately, not a given. In his book *Textual Power*, Robert Scholes explains in detail the problem of passive consumption that most student readers experience in contrast with the desirable active construction of meaning that produces an interpretation of a text (5). Scholes further explains that students need to see "reading not simply as consumption but as a productive activity, the making of meaning, in which one is guided by the text one reads, of course, but not simply manipulated by it" (8). For Scholes then, there exists in the traditional literature classroom a binary relationship between consumption and production. Student readers reflect this binarism by passively "consuming" texts without actively producing meaning. The goal in disrupting this binary is to encourage students to actively and critically approach a text and to construct meaning as they read the text. An example of an assignment that does this, I argue, is the adaptation assignment. In a moment, I will discuss how this assignment demands that students interpret the assigned text and produce an adaptation that illustrates their interpretation. One can see, then, that the assignment forces students to break out of the passive consumer mode and to become active/productive readers who are interpreting the text—they are in effect becoming producers of interpretations, in the form of films that adapt Ovidian material.

Though many examples of student film adaptations of Ovid's works are available for public viewing online through sites like YouTube, there are limitations as to what researchers and viewers know about the original context of the films. Information can be found in bios, tags, descriptions, and comments that accompany these YouTube postings. Using these sources, I was able to determine that the student film adaptations to be discussed in this chapter originated as class assignments that were later published on YouTube. In these adaptations, the students wrote the scripts and acted in the films as part of the assignment. However, information concerning the grades earned, original prompts, and exact roles are rarely provided in the Internet context. The importance of the YouTube context will be discussed later, but for now I want to turn to a specific student adaptation of the Orpheus myth.

According to comments from the individual who posted the video, this first student adaptation I will examine was originally created as a performance-based assessment for seventh-grade students. It does differ from most of the adaptations published on YouTube because it was published in March of 2007 by the adapting students' teacher (whose username is Latinology)¹², rather than posted by the students themselves, as most are. This particular adaptation is a modern re-telling of Orpheus with the students as actors and the school as the setting. Through a close reading of select scenes from the twelve-minute film, I will analyze these students' reworking of the characters, setting, themes, and narrative strategies of Ovid's Orpheus myth. This analysis will enable me to explore the manifestation (the

¹² For ease of reference, the YouTube videos are cited by the username of the account that posted the video online.

production) of their active reading and interpretation of the adapted text. This exploration will also demonstrate the potential value these student adaptations have for enlarging and enriching the resources available to critical pedagogy.

The first move these student adapters make is to re-set Ovid's myth in the twenty-first century. The film opens with an echoing announcer welcoming "Ladies and gentlemen" to a concert: "live at the coliseum, the newest rock sensation Orpheus" (Latinology). Screaming fans run through cafeteria doors. Some wave foam fingers, sport togas, and/or sparkle wearing scarf accessories tied at the waist. In short, the opening shot mixes twenty-first century culture and fashion with the modern perception of Ovid's ancient Rome. The adapters make no attempt to hide the school setting for their adaptation, but they do make some prop and costume choices that mimic Roman culture. Thus, the hybrid-culture stage is set for viewers to meet the main characters.

The adapters move quickly to establish the characters, the prominent role of music, and the narrative strategies employed in this Ovidian adaptation. The screen blacks out, and seconds later shots of various cardboard painted lyres bombard the screen. The final shot of a jean or cargo clad arm playing the simplest looking lyre expands and pans out. Finally, the figure of Orpheus is revealed in all his blue anime wig and retro sunglasses glory. This order of introduction—the music and the instruments before the actual Orpheus character—tells the viewer from the film's beginning that music is the most important force in this narrative. In fact, in keeping with Ovid's emphasis on the power of music as an art form, these adapters frequently use music to set the tone for the audience. The lyrics, be they explicit or

implied, take the place of voice-overs. For instance, the song Orpheus lip-syncs the lyrics to, which has until now been in rock instrumental mode, inflames and energizes his audience. The visual that accompanies the music now shifts to a black screen with two side-by-side squares that show two perspectives of the concert. On the left, the viewers see the concert audience jumping and screaming. On the right, the viewers see Orpheus jamming out and singing, “Your eyes tell the story of the day you wish you could” (Latinology). The major effect of this shot is that the viewer simultaneously sees the adaptation’s concert audience from the perspective of Orpheus and sees Orpheus from the perspective of the concert audience. Consequently, neither point of view is privileged. The viewer may catch glimpses of multiple characters’ points of view, but he/she is not limited to one character’s point of view. This imitates the Ovidian myth that, while interested in psychology and human emotion,¹³ does not attempt the interiority that much modern fiction relies on. In Ovid’s myths, as in this adaptation, the story telling is often a matter of narration, rather than character dialogue, and the Ovidian narrator describes the response of characters. In a similar move, these adapters use the visual nature of the film medium to show viewers what Ovid might have described in words.

The students work to adapt the poetic narration to the film medium, and, since they elect not to have a narrative voice over, the soundtrack becomes a crucial element for telling the story in this adaptation. The soundtrack is also another way viewers can hear the adapters interpreting—actively “consuming”/reading—the

¹³ Scholar Charles Martindale, in particular, describes Ovid “as a psychologist rather than a delineator of character and personality” (17). Scholars value Ovid as a poet most interested in “the whole range of human emotions associated with love” (17).

Orpheus myth. The actors do have some lines, but a great deal of the narrative hinges on the audience's familiarity with the soundtrack. The soundtrack features popular songs such as "Yesterday" by the Beatles, "Collide" by Howie Day, and "A Favor House Atlantic" by Coheed and Cambria. Additionally, the adapters' decision to lean so heavily on music to tell the story further demonstrates their engagement with the adapted text, which also emphasizes the power of music. From the opening song that Orpheus sings (really lip-syncs), the viewer can hear the lyrics telling the story. The pop rock song's official title is "A Favor House Atlantic," but it has an equally trackable popular title "Bye Bye Beautiful." This song's meaning is ambiguous, but one interpretation is that it refers to the singer shooting his beloved with the arrows of love. In this interpretation, the song's lyrics are literally about a couple fleeing. They try to make it to safety, but there is an implication that the lover is lost to the singer. The lover's eyes "tell the stories of a day you wish you could/ Recall the moments" (A Favor House Atlantic Lyrics). I cite this particular interpretation because it outlines the love plot of the Orpheus myth and because the viewers are listening to this lyrical synopsis as they watch the first few minutes of the adaptation.

The adapters use this song to introduce the doomed couple Orpheus and Eurydice as a twenty-first century rock star and an adoring fan. Orpheus' music draws Eurydice out of the crowd, and she joins him onstage. Unfortunately, when she tries to fall back onto the crowd (a popular concert image), the crowd refuses to catch her. She falls and lies motionless on the cafeteria/coliseum floor, perhaps a foreshadowing of her imminent demise. Here again, the adapters have clearly done

more than simply retell the text. In this production of their interpretation, the audience can see the students' active reading of Ovid's "Orpheus and Eurydice." They have taken their interpretation of the characters and events and adapted them for a modern audience. Orpheus the poet singer is now Orpheus the rock star, and Eurydice the nymph is now Eurydice the nymph and "crazy fan." The lovers' first meeting place changes from an ancient Roman forest to a twenty-first century cafeteria turned roman coliseum.

However, the adaptors diverge from Ovid's love scene which immediately follows Eurydice's hearing Orpheus sing, and they force the audience to wait until the end of the concert for Orpheus and Eurydice to "fall in love." A security man informs Orpheus "that insane stage-diving nymph is here" (Latinology). Orpheus approves her entry, and Eurydice enters the scene. Viewers see her puff-painted tee shirt that reads, "Orpheus rocks my socks" for a few seconds before the camera transitions into a close up of Eurydice's face. Meanwhile, the adapters once more rely on music to set the narrative's tone, as the popular love song "Collide" by Howie Day plays softly in the background. Eurydice immediately praises the power of Orpheus' music. She explains that the song most moving for her was "Cupid's Mom Has Got it Going on," which apparently "changed her life" (Latinology). The scene ends with the lovers running off to be married as the song "Collide" crescendoes in the background.

In this scene, the adapters also rework a theme of transgressive sexual desire and transformation that underscores all of Ovid's poems in the *Metamorphoses*. With the adapted song title, "Cupid's Mom Has Got it Going On," the adapters hint at

the poems/songs dealing with transformation as a consequence of sexual transgression that surround the Orpheus myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Cupid's mom is, of course, Venus, the Goddess of love. Naturally, she is the one who "has it going on." What makes this song title adaptation work to adapt Ovid's sexually transgressive and transformative themes is that it reminds the audience of the popular 2003 song "Stacey's Mom."¹⁴ The song is about a young boy in love with his friend's (Stacey's) mom, and the music video has disturbing masturbation and child-ogling-mother-figure scenes. When Eurydice praises Orpheus' rendition of "Cupid's Mom," she brings all of that disturbing and controversial sexual baggage from "Stacey's Mom" into the students' adaptation.

The fact that Eurydice says this is the song that "changed her life" bears further consideration given that the unifying theme of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is transformation. In fact, the *Metamorphoses* opens with the lines "Of bodies changed to other forms I tell;/You Gods, who have yourself wrought every change" (I.1-2). The changes in Ovid's myths are generally made as a consequence of some form of violent or transgressive desire or sexual act involving the Gods. This declaration, then, that a song about transgressive desire involving a mother figure (in the adaptation a Goddess) changes Eurydice's life is a horrifyingly delightful demonstration of knowledge and skill.¹⁵ The choice to include this song as a part of Orpheus' repertoire displays an understanding of the nature of many Ovidian myths, including those sung by Orpheus later in the *Metamorphoses*. With that line, the

¹⁴ The song is even more appropriate as it has been appropriated and adapted itself. It was adapted in 2005 when Dr. Pepper created a commercial around it.

¹⁵ I say horrifying only because these are, after all, middle school students adapting this text.

adapters, once more, show that they have not passively consumed this myth. Through their artistic choices, one can see they have actively produced an interpretation of this text. Their film adaptation, as a product, serves as the physical manifestation of that interpretation. It is the physical text that viewers can analyze. Additionally, the adapters' instructor can fully appreciate both the students' engagement with the adapted text, and the potential for such models of interpretive moves to be reused in the classroom.

The last scene of this particular adaptation is a scene that marks this adaptation as adapting Ovid's "Orpheus and Eurydice." As I mentioned in the previous chapter, many adaptations of Ovidian myths have credited Greek mythology in general rather than Ovid. Consequently, I want to take a moment here to review the scene in which Orpheus convinces Hades to release Eurydice, particularly because it exhibits two unique Ovidian qualities. Ovid scholar Sarah Annes Brown (details in the previous chapter) argues that there are particulars in Ovid's treatment of the myth that signal Ovid's version, rather than a general classic myth or even Virgil's version, is the adapted text. For instance, scholars note that Virgil gives minimal attention to the song that Orpheus sings to persuade Hades to release Eurydice's spirit. Alternately, Ovid actually pauses and devotes ten lines to describing his audience's reaction to Orpheus' song. In the adaptation I have been analyzing, the adapters have gone so far as to let their audience hear the song. Fitting with their pop culture consciousness, the song they choose for Orpheus' most moving lament is "Yesterday" performed by the Beatles.

In another move that in some ways simply takes Ovid's description of the response to the song one step further, this adaptation shows viewers a humorous flashback of Orpheus' and Eurydice's yesterdays. On one hand, this is the moment that uses the combination of visual and audio appeals to move the audience to feel the character's pain. On the other hand, there is also an element of the comical in this moment. The viewers experience the tonal shift from sorrowful to entertaining as they watch Orpheus and Eurydice play tetherball to the tender strains of "Yesterday." This itself is an amusing juxtaposition, a reminder of the children who are adapting this and a reminder of innocence that is often absent in Ovid. What makes this scene almost inappropriately funny is the fact that Orpheus is shorter than Eurydice. She hits the ball with only moderate force, and yet each time it comes to him, the ball swings around over Orpheus' head, even though he jumps to hit it each time. This pairing of opposite emotions, the ridiculous with the tragic, is itself a trademark of Ovid's. It is a subtle and sometimes unappreciated artistic choice. In fact, this "shift from grave to gay" is a narrative tactic that Martindale points out has "embarrassed [Ovid's] critics" as it is not a sign of "serious literature" (9). This scene signals an affinity with an Ovidian version of the Orpheus myth with the attention given to the song. Furthermore, with the choice of imagery accompanying the song, the scene further echoes Ovid's playful structure in his version of Orpheus, which pairs conflicting emotions of sorrow and absurdly entertaining.

Obviously, asking students to create adaptations can produce spectacular demonstrations of understanding. Furthermore, such an assignment can engage

students in the text through a more accessible medium than printed text. The combination of a change in medium, which allows students to physically engage texts (via acting and directing), and the interpretative demands made by the process of adaptation disrupts the consumption/production binary that troubles many teachers. Additionally, the change of medium to film, in this adaptation, illustrates the successful incorporation of new media into the classroom. This type of assignment that makes space in the classroom for new media and student experience thus yields many benefits. I cite the student adaptation published by Latinology on YouTube as a specific example of new media contributing to the educator's ability to make space for student interests, values, and ideas in a classroom.¹⁶ Most crucial to the aims of critical pedagogy, this more open classroom allows students to engage in direct dialogue with the text, their peers, and the teacher.

Yet, as Scholes points out in *Textual Power*, this active construction of meaning by student readers is not the norm, nor is the dialogic classroom. If these adaptations demonstrate the possibility of the literature classroom to be dialogic and produce active student readers, how do educators start students on that seemingly very productive path that can lead to (literally) producing their own interpretations and critical readings? Here, I shift to the second focus of this chapter: my proposition for incorporating student-produced adaptations of

¹⁶ The author of "Creative Classroom Teaching," Julia Ellis, points out that a benefit of student "ideas, values, interests, and best efforts [being] expressed in their work" is an increased retention by students (260). It is clear from the above analysis that much of the culture these student adapters live and experience is invested in their adaptation. Consequently, an expected result is that creating such connections makes the adapted text more memorable and pertinent to them.

literature as intentional demonstration pieces of students' interpretive potential. My proposed strategy directly addresses the difficulty of moving students into more active roles, an educational issue also recognized by teacher and theorist Sheridan Blau in his book *The Literature Workshop*. Specifically, Blau argues that there exists a "pedagogical problem experienced by college teachers of literature" as well as "their secondary school colleagues: the inclination of our students to behave like consumers of literary interpretations rather than producers of them" (20). Here, he points out that students often experience literature in school as having an authoritative interpretation that the teacher alone generates. This expectation also reveals the inability of students to see themselves as participating in an interpretive community.¹⁷ That is, students expect the monologic classroom that critical pedagogy strives to transform. In this relationship between student and teacher, the student comes to class ready to consume, not the text, but rather the interpretation of the text that the teacher presents. This expectation on the part of students exists in conjunction with the belief that they cannot produce an interpretation that is meaningful in the context of the classroom and everyday life. Based on Blau's articulation of the difficulty students have identifying themselves as producers of interpretations, I conclude that before educators can expect students to actively read a literary text and produce an interpretation, educators must first help students reach two understandings. First, students must realize that a critical understanding of literature is a social, as well as individual, process. Second, and

¹⁷ The concept of interpretive communities can be traced to Stanley Fish, and for more details on interpretive communities online see Hannah Gourgey and Edward Smith's "'Consensual hallucination': Cyberspace and the creation of an interpretive community." This article also works with Fish's theory of interpretive communities.

most important, educators must also help students see that they are capable of producing meaningful interpretations and participating in an interpretive community.

In his recent work, Scholes goes so far as to say that educators must help students by enabling them to actively and critically read texts, in multiple media. While Scholes does not take a technologically determinant approach, he focuses on the necessity of encouraging students to perform “critical, questioning, and skeptical” readings rather than reverential readings of texts (16). In 1985, Scholes wrote,

The students who come to us now exist in the most manipulative culture human beings have ever experienced. They are bombarded with signs, with rhetoric, from their daily awakenings until their troubled sleep, especially with signs transmitted by the audio-visual media. . . What students need from us. . . is the kind of knowledge and skill that will enable them to make sense of their own interests, both individual and collective, to see through the manipulations of all sorts of texts in all sorts of media, and to express their own voices in some appropriate manner. (15-16)

This calling is even more imperative in the twenty-first century where devices that can access email, social networking sites, and the Internet are carried by children as early as middle school. The popularity of laptops, cell phones, iPods, iPads, and iTouch means that the bombardment of multiple medias is portable and constant. Scholes argues that educators have a responsibility to offer students the tools for

navigating such a media rich world, and the first step Scholes invites educators to take in order to give students what they “need” from us, as educators, is to change our perception of our role as teachers. He tells educators, “we must stop ‘teaching literature’ and start ‘studying texts’” (16). What I find so simple and empowering about this transition is the change from “teaching” to “studying” and from “literature” to “texts.” As Scholes is a critical pedagogy theorist, his recommendation to educators, not surprisingly, sounds like critical pedagogy’s call for the dialogic classroom. Scholes essentially proposes we shift from the “teacher” as sole possessor of knowledge to impart upon students to the teacher as one who studies with students. He also calls for literature educators to widen the curriculum, to bring the same rigorous attention to the details of media texts that we bring to literary texts. In addition to studying “literature” like Shakespeare, students also need to study the “texts” that flood their everyday lives. Again this moves teachers toward a dialogic classroom that also invests in student-generated dialogue.

As a way of establishing that student-centered dialogue even earlier than a final unit adaptation assignment, I propose that educators incorporate into their curricula student adaptations that have been published online, and specifically on YouTube. But before looking at another example of a student adaptation currently posted on YouTube, I want to emphasize a couple points about this proposition. Firstly, for the legitimization of student knowledge and experience, it is imperative that the adaptations be both products of students or youths and that they be viewed from their Internet popular culture setting. Specifically, in this chapter, I focus on the YouTube context. This Internet context becomes as much a part of the

discussion as the adaptation. The web page, and its user-generated content, becomes a text to be read, interpreted, and discussed. In this way, teaching through student adaptations on YouTube allows students and teachers to study not only literature, but also a representation of the type of online “texts” that students experience in their everyday lives. Secondly, in this method of teaching, the teacher is not the possessor of all knowledge, nor the only origin of interpretation. Furthermore, the teacher, both studies, in order to learn from them, these adaptations and acknowledges the students’ experience navigating and writing texts online. YouTube, as a popular culture site, then, becomes the instrument that joins student and teacher knowledge and experience in the classroom. Essentially, popular culture, through YouTube, becomes the tool critical pedagogy can employ in order to create the dialogic classroom with the student at the center and the teacher monologue disrupted.

An ideal text to analyze the potential for success that such a method of teaching may achieve is a student adaptation of Ovid’s Orpheus myth. In teaching Ovid, one already must teach the mutability, flexibility, and instability of a text, for the survival and importance of the Ovidian myths depend in large part on the ability of that text to be appropriated by different cultures and beliefs over the last two millennia (referring to the traditions outlined in the first chapter). Ovid’s themes, the power and importance of love, art (music), and the individual experience, add to the suitability of his poem for the purposes of critical pedagogy. Again, the specific purposes of critical pedagogy that I focus on in this chapter are the transition from a teacher monological to a student-centered dialogical classroom. This student-

centered classroom incorporates student experience along with mediums and forms of student expression. In fact, Ovidian myths themselves have the status of a popular culture text when compared to the authoritative poet Virgil's version, particularly in the case of the Orpheus myth. Essentially, Ovidian myths represent a border between high and popular culture, as Ovid's writings both exemplify classical literature and rework traditional literary poetic forms and themes. This dual nature of Ovidian myths make them the perfect subject for a unit that aims to legitimize the student voice through the incorporation of YouTube, as representative of popular culture, into a high culture institution. Ovid is a prime example for the potential to legitimize the student voice in the classroom because these student adaptations are being published and well received online, but also because the tradition of Ovidian adaptations itself, as discussed in chapter one, sanctions and authorizes appropriations of the text—including appropriations by students.

My proposition, to reintroduce student adaptations published on YouTube into the classroom, is grounded in the theories of critical pedagogy theorists Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. In their introduction to *Media Knowledge: Readings in Popular Culture, Pedagogy, and Critical Citizenship*, Giroux and McLaren specifically argue, "It is crucial for radical educators to develop pedagogical practices that legitimize the conditions that allow students to speak from their own experiences" (xxv). If, as educators, we desire students to think critically about the world they live in, then we must first teach them that they have a voice and that they have experiential knowledge that is valuable. One step towards legitimizing student voices and spaces is to bring the sites on which they are producers, like YouTube,

into the classroom. However, this is of course not as simple as merely showing videos posted on YouTube in the classroom. As Giroux and McLaren continue to point out, “knowledge must be re-invented and reconstructed by inviting students to be border crossers, by encouraging them to collapse disciplines that separate high from popular culture” (xxx). If bringing “popular culture,” in the form of YouTube, into the classroom is merely step one, the next step must be allowing students to take the analytical skills honed on high culture, canonical texts, and practice them on texts they are surrounded by and contribute to in their everyday lives.

Discussions about the interpretive process modeled in the student adaptations and the YouTube context as a site for an interpretive community would require careful thought and moderating. Still, the pay-off for students and teachers is the potential for these discussions to result in the dialogic space that invites and values the students’ funds of knowledge. Such dialogue could also lead to a legitimization of the student voice and interpretation both in the classroom and in the everyday lives of students. Students might begin to see each other as participants in a shared interpretive community. They might see each other as “professional amateurs” whose interpretations or “craft” “[informs] and [influences] the way they engage in the work of the class. They see academic disciplines and their popular cultural practices as equal resources for their work” (Gustavson and Applebaum 294). The students could see their peers as resources, as producers of knowledge and interpretations that they can learn from. It seems fitting, then, that these student adaptations of Ovid, which originated in the classroom and have been

published on YouTube, return to the classroom as teaching tools. The adaptations began as classroom assignments, like the video analyzed earlier in this chapter, but, through publication on YouTube, they become a part of popular culture. It is this specific type of popular culture, student adaptations published on YouTube, that I argue could prove a useful tool for continuing to teach Ovid as literature. These particular adaptations offer educators the opportunity to teach and revitalize Ovid in the classroom. Additionally, these adaptations create the opportunity to inspire confidence in student voices, to demonstrate the possibility of students as producers of interpretations rather than passive consumers, to link popular and high culture, and, ultimately, to produce critical citizens.

Having explained the potential benefits of discussing student-produced texts in the classroom, in the last section of this chapter, I will focus on demonstrating the close reading educators might perform of these videos shown from the context of YouTube. This includes not only analyzing the video but also the YouTube context. This analysis invites the type of dialogue critical pedagogy strives for in the classroom. The teacher's specialized knowledge of Ovid would be enhanced by the student's familiarity with and skill at deciphering the YouTube, an example of an Internet space, context. The dialogue that would ensue acknowledges both the educator's knowledge and the student's funds of knowledge. In this last section, I will analyze a second, different, student adaptation of the Orpheus myth that serves as an example of a student adaptation that students have already acknowledged, in comments on the web page, as a resource. Consequently, this second adaptation

demonstrates the potential fund of student knowledge, the legitimization of the student voice, and the possibility of active student consumption—interpretation.

I want to begin by describing the major moves and artistic choices this adaptation makes as a way of illustrating this second group of students' visible interpretation of the Orpheus myth. According to the online description, this second video is another example of an adaptation assignment completed by five students (grade level unknown). It was published by one of the student adaptors whose YouTube user name is thegypsytellia. These adapters were specifically asked "to creatively re-tell the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in a visually artistic way" (thegypsytellia). Their specific instruction to retell the story in a "visually artistic way" leads this second set of adapters to make drastically different artistic choices from the first adapters discussed in this chapter. For instance, the second group of adapters does not use actors or even animation. Instead, they created a sepia puppet world that makes no attempt to hide the controlled and constructed nature of the video. Despite this obvious two-dimensionality, the video has an immediately somber feel as "The Tallywood Strings, Tribute to Radiohead 'How to disappear Completely'" plays while a forest scene gradually comes into focus (thegypsytellia). For a few seconds a deer centered among the trees is the only visual. Slowly, a lyre bobs onto the scene. The man holding it appears, then vanishes behind a tree, and finally appears again. The lyre held in front of him re-emerges first, pulling the body of its player behind it. Music notes float around the character Orpheus' head. They trail above and behind him, swaying above the line of animals following him across the screen. A beautiful woman enters from the right

and meets him in the middle. The shot changes to a close up of their faces, and little cut-out hearts dangle on slender strings around the lovers.

These adaptors also face the difficulty of adapting Ovid's narrated poem into the film medium, and like the adaptors discussed in the first half of this chapter they eschew the narrative voice-over strategy. However, in a bolder artistic move, the adaptors of the adaptation posted by thegypsytellia have no speaking characters. They also use the same song throughout the five-minute film, so there are no lyrics throughout the adaptation. In order to indicate when Orpheus plays his music, the adaptors use the music-note cutouts. The viewer understands that music notes' appearance indicates the presence of Orpheus' most moving songs. For instance, in that first music-note filled scene, the power of the music draws Eurydice to Orpheus. Here, as with the previous video, the audience is reminded that music, as it represents art, is the main character of the narrative. As further proof of this, the lyre enters the scene ahead of Orpheus. The position of it, stretched out before him rather than in front of him, reminds viewers that he himself is lead by his music. That he and his art are not the same entity. It is connected to him, but it is also separate from him. With the lack of narration or of any words, these adaptors also do not use any kind of subtitles, the audience focuses on the visuals and the music.

The adaptors move quickly to establish Ovid's love theme through the romance plot, and the music notes are replaced with cutout hearts. A significant change these adaptors make from the adapted text, though, is that Orpheus is with Eurydice when the snake slips onto the screen and bites her. She is taken immediately to the underworld by a skeletal hand, and Orpheus leans over but

cannot follow her down. The shot transitions into one of him surrounded by the animals, and a close-up reveals tears on strings sliding down the screen as if falling from Orpheus. The camera moves to watch the same stringed tears fall from the eyes of the animals. Finally, Orpheus begins his descent to the Underworld, and, as he encounters obstacles, the appearance of the music notes indicate the power of music to help him overcome the obstacles. The audience sees Orpheus turn to face the other side of the screen right before Eurydice becomes visible. He does not look at her or embrace her throughout the rest of the journey. They have climbed almost completely out of the underworld when he looks back at her. As he gazes on her, the skeletal hand takes her once more, and when he tries to follow her, it stops him from moving any farther down the slope. Dejected, Orpheus re-enters the forest. He slumps against a tree. The music notes are absent from the air, and the screen darkens as lights on strings inch down the screen. They are the stars indicating a definite shift to night.

While the interpretive and artistic decisions the adapters make—to have no narration or words and to leave out Hades and the other nymphs—results in a lack of “fidelity,” the adaption remains true to the spirit and themes of Ovid’s poem. Viewing this film, without any prior knowledge of the myth, an audience would understand that the music is the powerful driving force. The lost love is irretrievable. The personal grief is compelling and invites the audience to empathize. Art must acknowledge the cycles of nature; art can cross the boundaries between life and death, but the boundaries cannot be dissolved. Yet, with the final image of Orpheus alive, the lyre still in his hand, the audience understands that

there is hope. The music, the art, remains alive—not more powerful than the natural order, but distinct from it. All of these themes remain in a drastic adaptation that strips the adapted text, the Ovidian poem, of the very thing that constructs it: words. While the persistence of Ovidian themes in modern adaptations and more could arise in a class discussion of this adaptation, students would benefit most from the reminder that this adaptation is itself a production of students. The long tradition of adapting Ovid (discussed in the previous chapter) could be briefly explained at this point. The location of this adaptation within that tradition, as participating in the often, historically, literary high culture should be made clear. And with that recognition, the students begin seeing themselves as potential producers of these adaptations, as the “border crossers” that Giroux and McLaren claim they can be. The identity of students could be reconstructed so students see themselves as participants in meaning making rather than recipients of a teachers meaning. Incorporating student adaptations published on YouTube into the classroom shows students how their peers have already become participants and producers of academically and socially valued interpretations.

But the conversation does not and should not end there; the specific location on YouTube invites instructors to ask students to interrogate the web page itself as a whole text. For when students watch this video, they see more than just the adaptation. On the right side of the web page, they see “related” videos, posted on and recommended by YouTube. They see that (as of the 8th of April 2010) this adaptation has been viewed 5,820 times. They see that out of forty-one ratings, forty viewers have indicated they “Liked” rather than “Disliked” this video. They

could themselves rate the video. They can expand a “views” section on the page to see what countries this video is most popular in. They could see how viewers found the video. They could see that this video is most popular with females between the ages of 13-17 and 45-54 and males between the ages of 45-54 (thegypsytellia).¹⁸ Below the video and the “views” section, they could see four pages of comments that they can reply to or rate. The ratings and the comments are ways for viewers to interact with the adapters and with each other across potentially large time and physical distances. The context of these adaptations offers educators a unique opportunity to discuss the way students interact with new media from the students’ daily lives. A discussion on how viewers determine whether or not they “Like” it or will “Favorite” it could lead to a discussion about what YouTube popular culture values and the way those values correlate with literary high culture values students learn in the classroom. This video is a prime example of a text that has both high and popular culture value: it artistically adapts a canonical author, but it also situates him in an often highly critical popular culture setting where this student adaptation of Ovid’s myth manages to garner popular acclaim.

Publishing this adaptation on YouTube not only increases the awareness of Ovid online, but it also allows the student creators to receive praise for their interpretation and academic voice outside of the classroom. Thus, the publication of these adaptations on YouTube centralizes the student voice and experience—

¹⁸ The “countries viewed in,” the “how viewers found the video,” and the demographics were all current options and statistics as of the 8th of April 2010. However, YouTube is constantly changing and as of the 1st of July 2010 these facts are not available. Yet because YouTube is constantly changing, these might reappear and new options and statistics that should also be examined are, and likely will continue, to become visible.

exemplifying the student-centeredness that critical pedagogy calls for in the classroom. This ties into the aim of critical pedagogy to extend the value of critically reading, questioning, and engaging texts outside the confines of the classroom.

Bringing these videos into the classroom is one way to show students that their active reading of literature, and any text, can be valuable in their everyday lives. It is the very use of everyday language, spelling, and vernacular that so powerfully affirms the potential value of a student's critical interpretation for life outside of the classroom. For instance, one viewer commented that the video was "amazing, simply amazing, i gotta tell u im a guy that cant cry at anything even if a loved one has died. but this made me cry for the first time in years when i watched this" (JonathanKanada). With this comment, the emotional value of the student's interpretation is described. Another viewer says,

you've done a really lovely piece here, opheus has been prehaps my favourite myth for many years, so i a very biased to staying true to the story...

the music is beautiful and the art and the direction of the piece and the moent is lovely.

i would love to see you, as you developpe your skills and grow, another version that is the full story...

do some more readings on Orpheus because as an artist i really think you pick up some fancinating concepts from the architype.

you are tallented man! (TheWildStar11)

This comment encourages the students to continue producing films, and it specifically encourages the students to continue interpreting. It also comments on the way the students clearly productively read and interpreted the adapted text: “I really think you pick up some fascinating concepts.” Another viewer further praises the student’s interpretation. This time the commenter even claims the video is on par with commercial popular culture:

As a whole this video is a bulls-eye hit. a great representation of the story but more so a stupendous act of transforming those feelings we get when we study this page of mythology into an artistic interpretive video clip. I'm floored. If there was only one good thing that ever came from me playing around on Youtube it would be coming across this piece. This is only a school project but in my book it runs with Salvador Dahli and Disneys "Destino." My hat is off to you. A truly moving piece. (SgtBurkette68).

Bringing this type of commentary into the classroom can also encourage students to see not only the value their critical work has for their teachers, but also to see their work embedded in the various response categories of YouTube. Each “like it” or encouraging comment indicates the viewer finds the student interpretation meaningful. That last comment went so far as to say viewing this adaptation could be the best thing that they have done in visiting the popular culture site, YouTube. The teacher might even open up the discussion to ask how these comments differ from typical YouTube comments. Even though there are spelling and grammar issues—the comments are obviously meant for the relaxed YouTube setting—the

content of the comments and even the tone varies from the often homophobic, sarcastic, and/or one-word responses to videos posted on YouTube.

In addition to confirming that the student voices and interpretive work are meaningful both within and outside of the classroom, these comments can also show students that they can be sources of knowledge for their peers—ultimately creating that student centered dialogue Glenn describes. Several comments thank the adapters for helping them better understand the myth: “This is such a pretty and innocent way to depict the story of ‘Orpheus and Eurydice’. Since I’m playing Eurydice in a upcoming play, I was happy to have found this. It gave me a better representation of the emotional side of my character. Thank you” (LaElSc). Numerous other viewers over the last two years have also noted their appreciation of the students’ adaptation of the myth. One such viewer posted in April of 2009, “I now understand the story... about Orpheus... Thanks, this vid was a BIG help to me! :D” (Kino4500). I want to deviate slightly here to add another comment that was initially surprising. The viewer saw the adaptation for the first time, not perhaps on YouTube in an informal setting, but rather in a classroom: “This is so beautiful. I saw it today during a Lit presentation about them. I love the music and the art. ITS AMAZING!!!! IM FAVORITING IT” (chamigirl101). These videos are not only helping other students understand Ovid outside of the classroom, but they are already making their way back into the classroom via student presentations. Additionally, in the comments for the first adaptation analyzed in this chapter, teachers were commenting that they used student adaptations that had been on published YouTube in their classes. What capacity these teachers use the adaptations in is

unclear, but it does make the point that these now popular culture student adaptations are already trickling back into the classroom.

There are obvious benefits to asking students to do creative adaptation assignments that make the process of interpretation visible to students, instructors, and users of Internet sites like YouTube. But what I hope is equally apparent at the close of this chapter is that incorporating student adaptations published on YouTube into the classroom will both model student interpretive processes and legitimize the value of student work in the classroom and in everyday life. The field of critical pedagogy offers the theory and language that validates this decision to include these YouTube videos into the curriculum as an integral part of the unit of study, as opposed to merely opening or closing the unit. To some extent, this incorporation is already happening in classrooms.

The specific teaching strategy I have presented—incorporating student Ovidian adaptations that have been posted on YouTube in the classroom—merely builds upon alternative teaching strategies teachers already employ. Furthermore, as mentioned several times, with his long history of change and progression, Ovid—the adapter and adapted, the appropriator and appropriated—is the perfect author with whom to enact this teaching strategy. This expansion on what is already being done with Ovid and adaptations has the potential to further the aims of literature teachers who embrace a critical pedagogy approach to the dialogic classroom. Those aims of literature teachers being to encourage students to actively read texts, to encourage students to produce interpretations rather than passively absorb

teacher interpretations, to legitimize the student voice, and to bridge the gap between Scholes' "literature" and "media texts." The culminating impact of this is not only to keep Ovid alive in the classroom, but, ultimately, through teaching Ovid, to produce students who are critical readers of all texts and media they encounter in the classroom and in their everyday lives.

Conclusion

Through the two chapters of this thesis, I have explored the tradition of Ovidian adaptation from the medieval period to modern day Internet adaptations. I have also attempted to explore the way Ovid can function as a classical text in literature curriculum as well as the ways Ovidian texts can be used to subvert the traditional classroom organization. All of this has been my attempt to address the question that I found so compelling from the beginning of my research: where is Ovid going? One place we can already see Ovid beginning to occupy is the Internet. As scholars and educators move into the twenty-first century, we must continue studying this media that brings the literature we study and teach to the homes and everyday lives of students and citizens. Scholars of Ovid, in particular, often conclude their books by asking where the future of Ovidian adaptation lies. This thesis is an attempt to show that one place the present and future of Ovidian adaptations can be found is on the Internet.

Not only is there the potential for interest in Ovidian adaptations to be revitalized through their Internet presence, but also there are pedagogical uses for these adaptations published online. These uses, however, do not merely re-enforce reverential readings of Ovid; rather, they encourage students to become active readers capable of producing their own critical interpretations of a given text. This active and questioning reading is an example of the transferable skills that literature educators strive to help students hone. The critical questioning that begins in the classroom can quickly be applied to everyday Internet texts that students encounter.

In fact, bringing Ovidian adaptations into the classroom is a step in the direction of not only modeling interpretive processes for students, but also of bringing representations of everyday Internet texts into the classroom for analysis. Furthermore, the online context allows Internet users to directly engage the text, the creator of the text, and fellow audience members of the text. These visible and interactive responses illustrate the discursive nature of literary studies. At the same time, the public and easily accessible nature of sites such as YouTube invite students to become participants in interpretive communities. Since most students today have likely participated in an Internet discourse, even if not on YouTube, modeling and discussing a critical analysis of these types of discourse will further hone students' active, critical, and questioning reading skills while teaching them to apply these skills to their daily lives. These are some of the pedagogical possibilities of incorporating student-produced adaptations and their Internet context into literature curriculum (though it is not an exhaustive list of possibilities).

Aside from uses for educators in the classroom, these Internet adaptations of Ovid provide scholars with fresh research material. Admittedly, using online sources can be difficult for many reasons, such as the mutability of websites, the possibility that Internet content will be deleted, and the limited contextual information offered. However, the online medium also offers scholars and educators the chance to glimpse the interpretive and response process of creators and viewers of these adaptations. Also, adaptations that individuals make for their own pleasure, rather than for a class assignment, present an additional opportunity. With these personally motivated adaptations, scholars can, as they have with

adaptations like Milton's "Lycidas," explore why canonical texts, like Ovid's stories in his *Metamorphoses*, might prompt these individuals to adapt and share their interpretation of the canonical text. Such explorations would differ from the analytical work done in this thesis since a teacher's prompt compelled students to create the adaptations explored here.

Though the adaptations discussed in the second chapter originated as a class assignment, these adaptations can have as powerful an effect on their audience as the personally motivated adaptations do. Although the second chapter did focus exclusively on student-produced adaptations, I also found adaptations, such as the video game *Don't Look Back* and videos on YouTube, that were created by those with a personal, as opposed to an academic, interest in adapting Ovid's tales. Often, many viewers of the adaptations posted on YouTube and the players of Cavanagh's game expressed a personal interest in or connection to the adaptations and adapted Ovidian myths. For instance, a comment from the second chapter, in which a viewer confessed to crying when watching the adaptation of the Orpheus myth, is an example of the powerful affect Ovidian themes of the human passions continues to have on modern audiences.

Though much scholarship has been published about Ovid in the last century, there is obviously new ground to cover that changes daily. As my research has shown, scholars can say where Ovid has been, and we, as scholars can speculate about his influence on literature and culture over the last two thousand years. And although I have explored the possibility that there will be an Internet presence and influence, what we cannot say for certain is where Ovid will go or how and for what

purpose future adapters will use his material. However, what is clear is that today, simply by perusing the Internet, we can see new Ovidian adaptations appearing online, posted and viewed from around the world. And what is most intriguing to me is that anyone with Internet access can read first-hand the interpretations and responses of modern audiences from diverse ages and cultures. Furthermore, the conversation carried out through Ovidian adaptations online invites audiences to become a part of the conversation and to help shape the conversation with comments and more adaptations. As adaptations have transformed Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to inhabit the Internet, Ovidian adaptations open themselves to endless possibilities for continual transformation. This is the hope that I find and offer at the end of my research and analysis. There is a rich source of material for both scholars, teachers, and lovers of Ovid in general, and it is only a mouse click away.

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