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HU321 - Mythology

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23 April 2020

Her Condolences: Explanation Paper

Introduction

For the Mythology Capstone assignment I chose to write a series of short stories, told in Artemis' point of view, which compile into a small novel called *Her Condolences*. Each chapter brings the reader closer to Artemis, deeply understanding her as a character and goddess. While each facet is an adaptation of the myths about her, I tell them different from their original counterparts by giving more insight to what I believed was highlighted in the original. Essentially, the reader can tell which story each chapter is adapted from by reading the title dedicated to that specific chapter. Right below the chapter names, I write a small excerpt, summarizing the original myth in (what I believe to be) Artemis' eyes, and highlighting the points that I adapted in my version of the myth. I named the story *Her Condolences* because she is essentially sending out her grievances to those from the original myths, hence why each chapter is an adaptation of their individual stories. This entire book is told as if a person is watching an action movie because I find that is the easiest way to portray women in their Feminine Warrior habitat while keeping the audience captivated.

A brief summary of the required elements of your myth

Actaeon

In the original myth, retold by Thomas Bulfinch, Artemis was bathing in a lake when Actaeon was hunting and accidentally stumbled upon her. He saw her naked and Artemis turned him into a stag in a fit of rage. Actaeon's hunting dogs were possessed with a raging spirit and proceeded to rip into the stag, killing Actaeon (Bulfinch 621).

In my adaptation of myth, Artemis is deeply angered by seeing her reflection in her bathroom mirror, to the point where she shatters the glass. The reader cannot detect this through just a surface reading, but Actaeon is the mirror and Artemis breaking said mirror is a correlation to her crushing Actaeon's curiousness by killing him. Artemis sees her own morality and vulnerability staring back at her through the reflection, and that scares her. So she eliminates the threat. When reading the original myth, I figured Artemis killed Actaeon so brutally because no one had seen her raw form, being a maiden goddess and all. So I figured someone seeing her like that caused fear to creep inside her mind, thus why she acted out so strategically. These were the points I convey in my adaptation by explaining in great detail the intricacies of the mirror and plaster. And finally, her regretting the decision because the mirror was expensive, just as all life should be.

Alpheus and Arethusa

In the original myth of Alpheus and Arethusa, retold by Edith Hamilton, Arethusa was bathing in a river when Alpheus, who was later revealed to be the god of that river, called out to her saying that he loved her. Arethusa wanted nothing to do with a man, being a devotee to Artemis, so she ran. Sadly, she knew she could not outrun a god so she called to her goddess (Hamilton 1983). Artemis then transformed her into a spring of water and opened up the Earth, creating a tunnel for her to jump down in, that lead to Ortygia, a place sacred to Artemis (Hamilton 1983).

In my adaptation of the story I wrote Arethusa as a member of the elite team of women because she is a survivor. Artemis saved her all those years ago and in this story she saves another. I made the kidnapped girls name Ortygia because it is a symbol of a safe place. There, Arethusa was protected by Artemis. And now, Ortygia can be seen as Artemis' adopted child, who she will also protect. I wanted to humanize Artemis by showing that she wants thing that we all desire in life. In Artemis' original myths, she can be seen as cold and calculating, only caring about her followers (and Orion), so I kept that aspect the same. When I inserted Apollo into the story, I wrote him as apologetic because he was the reason Artemis accidentally killed Orion all those years ago. I also wanted this story to tie in with the later chapter labeled Orion. The reader can conclude that Ortygia represents Arethusa all that time ago, the man who kidnapped her, along with his men, all represent Alpheus and the fear of the chase he instilled in Arethusa, from the original myth. I wanted to show what would have happened if Alpheus got what he wanted. Many men in Greek mythology never shy away from the opportunity to take what is not given to them. So, in this modernized feminist chapter, I show how Artemis handled the situation.

Otus and Ephialtes

I adapted this myth from Edith Hamilton's book *Mythology*. In her telling of the original myth, Otus and Ephialtes, Otus was in love with Hera while Ephialtes wanted Artemis, so both decided that they would have them. The fates were with Ephialtes that day, so they decided to capture Artemis first (Hamilton 2349). Once they finally found Artemis, which only she allowed because she knew what they wanted, she led them to the island of Naxos where she transformed herself into a beautiful, white doe. The brothers, momentarily distracted, split up and started to track the doe on both angles. With their spears in place the brothers aimed and attempted to pierce the doe, but the animal that was Artemis disappeared, and the spears of the brothers stabbed each other instead. When the brothers lie dead on the ground Edith Hamilton ends the story with "such was the vengeance of Artemis" (Hamilton 2349).

In this chapter I kept my adaptation as painstakingly close to the original as possible (two brothers, Artemis leading them to an inevitable doom...) because I feel like the myth displayed the vengeance of Artemis well. This chapter displays how Artemis doesn't need her huntresses to be with her to handle all situations, she is still independent. The only thing I kept different from the original myth was leaving one of the brothers alive when Artemis goes up to him. Call me sadistic, but I wanted her to have some fun torturing a rapist.

Orion

In the original myth, Orion was Artemis' favorite hunter and first love; she was even going to marry him. One day, Orion was swimming in the ocean with his head above water and Apollo dared Artemis that "she could not hit that black thing on the sea" (Bulfinch 2982). Artemis had impeccable aim and the waves rolled Orion's body to the shoreline. After many tears, Artemis put him among the stars for all to see.

In the Orion chapter, not only do I portray Artemis in a Femme Fatale light, but I also point out how she lost the man that she is infatuated with again due to trickery. Only, in this adaptation, Apollo is not the trickster, but instead it's the mystery man himself. That was the climax that I want the audience to realize. She lost the man she's ever loved, but in my adaptation, she has a chance to get him back because I believe Orion symbolized hope. If a mortal man can get a goddess of maidenhood wanting to marry him, then that's hope enough. I also feel like she got the short end of the stick, so I gave her a fighting chance to not let history repeat itself.

My Condolences

This story wasn't really an adaptation of a myth, more like expressing the flaws of the gods and Olympus as a whole while showing Artemis as a Feminine Warrior by bringing it to their attention. I wrote this with the intent of highlighting Artemis' demanding nature. In this chapter she is speaking to the entire pantheon of the gods, highlighting all their flaws, as well as her own. I wanted this to be an incorporation of the way human worshipped the gods without knowing that the gods were just as childish as them. In truth, I've never read a story or myth where someone was speaking on the flaws of the gods so blatantly (I'm sure they're out there, I just haven't seen them), so I decided to write my own.

How you used and adapted your research on the myth and incorporated your findings of the requirements in your adaptation

From the article On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough by Alberto Alesina et al, I write Artemis as the opposite of what women were supposed to be, obedient, subservient, obligated to their male. Obviously, it is the modern time now. America alone, has had many Women's Rights Movements up until this point, and yet there is still a divide between genders. I want the reader to focus on her actions, her personality, the absence of men in her life. She is a goddess of maidenhood, so it works well with what I'm trying to tie in together, that's why I chose her.

From the article Artemis and the New Feminine Psychology by Valerie Andrews, I press the qualities that Dr. Andrews talks about. She sates how she was ancient Greece's modern feminist. I show those qualities in my adaptation of the story, but I avoid going too deep in the misogyny of women. I don't want this to be a feminist adaptation of every story, I want it to be a warrior adaptation. Men and women are equals. And just as much as people get tired of hearing it, I get tired of writing it. I don't want this to be the deconstruction of modern morals, tearing down my male counterparts while only uplifting the females.

What you wish your adaptation to get across to the audience

Actaeon

In the Actaeon chapter, I want the audience to focus on how Artemis shows human characteristics and acts on them like we would. A goddess can be raw like any person, and I want the audience to focus on that. Throughout this whole short novel, I show Artemis in a light that not only highlights her extraordinariness as a goddess, but also shows how personified she can be. I want the reader to be able to relate and connect with her. Throughout mythology she has been labeled as this stone-faced warrior (which I still portray her as), but I aim to display her vulnerabilities throughout this project, such as self-loathing, depression, and vengeance.

Alpheus and Arethusa

In the Alpheus and Arethusa chapter, I show Artemis in a modern setting. I've always seen Artemis as a Feminine Warrior and I wanted to incorporate that into this adaptation. Her and her followers resembled the Amazons in a way, minus the sleeping with men part. I wanted to show the team in a modern light, like so many of the Femme Fatale action movies we see today. In the end, I want the reader to take away a deeper understanding of the underline aspects from the original myths. Like the archetype of a Feminine Warrior and what it entails, the attitude of Artemis, how she acts with others incorporated with how I've always seen her, and so on.

Otus and Ephialtes

The Otus and Ephialtes chapter is the most straight forward section of the short novel. I make it pretty clear that rapists should deserve agonizing deaths, and I portray that through Artemis' actions towards the characters. The takeaway is simply, don't expect to get away with something seen as morally wrong but then be surprised when the punishment of those actions overly exceed the intended deed.

Orion

The Orion chapter is easily the funniest one I've written. The playful banter between Artemis and the mystery man show how I imagined she talked to Orion when he was still alive. Artemis was ready to take him as a husband in the original myths, so I replicated what I thought their conversations would be like in a modern setting, challenging each other, pushing, pulling. I want the reader to recognize the kindling love that Artemis had for Orion through this mystery man. The primary sources that I used for reference never go into depth about their relationship, so I wrote what I hoped it would be.

My Condolences

When the reader sees this, I want them to think of their own morality, their deeds, their flaws, their excuses. Artemis basically put the gods on blast and reprimanded them for acting like the humans they created so

long ago. There are so many stories throughout Greek mythology where the gods get to have their fun and the humans always pay the price for it, yet they are to respect and worship them? For what? Being treated like dirt? And when the gods do help or intervene, it's not always a welcoming solution to the problem. That's why, in my adaptation, when a god is not worshipped by his/her followers, they become irrelevant.

What your adaptation can reveal about the source myth

Actaeon

In the Actaeon chapter, I want to reveal the complexities of Artemis' character that were not displayed in the original myth. Why did she kill Actaeon so brutally? Because he gazed upon the untamable. I want to describe those delicate reasons that the original myths often leave out because they are just focused on the story line of the god portrayed and not the why. I display her anger at herself and how she comprehends the goddess staring back at her. Overall, this chapter is left to the eyes of the beholder, just like a mirror.

Alpheus and Arethusa

In this chapter, I revealed the irony of a maiden huntress being captured by a hunter, entrapping her, and keeping her for his eyes only. I revealed the fear of the hunt by showing how scared Ortygia was when Artemis found her. And I also revealed the kindness and vengefulness of Artemis by showing how she saved an innocent life and tore apart said innocents' captors.

Otus and Ephialtes

In this chapter I showed the vengeful nature of Artemis retold. In the original myth, vengeance was the driving force, so I wanted to keep that the same. I showed how arrogance and morality plays a role in the inevitable death that follows life.

Orion

In this chapter, I display the ghosted future of a failed relationship. I showed how history can repeat itself if one does not learn from their mistakes. That is why the mystery man got away momentarily at the end of the chapter, because Artemis didn't learn. And I show her repetitive nature as her human attributes. A human life is short so they do not have time to dwindle, but a goddess has all the time in the world. So what is her excuse?

My Condolences

Because the My Condolences chapter didn't come from a source myth, I just want the reader to reevaluate their life choices. I've noticed that throughout all the teachings and readings that we have done over the

semester, no one from those said mythologies has ever pointed out each and every gods' mistakes. That is the point of this chapter. I wanted to throw my own opinion into the novel. As seen many times in Greek mythology, the gods treat the humans, and other gods, a collateral damage, not really caring for their well-being. This is exceedingly true in the book *Circe* that I used as another primary source. I realized how the gods reacted and treated those around them throughout that book, so I wanted to make my own version of a confrontation.

Conclusion

To wrap this absurdly long paper up, I had so much fun writing these adaptations of Artemis. Her and Circe truly are my favorite characters from Greek mythology and I'm so happy we got to explore them. I loved the range and depth that I poured into Artemis' modernized character; my creativity held no bounds. I've taken away a lot from this project and this class as a whole. I can't wait to bring what I've learned thus far into my future Humanities classes and academic career.

Works Cited

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