

<i>ACTA CLASSICA UNIV. SCIENT. DEBRECEN.</i>	<i>LIV.</i>	<i>2018.</i>	<i>pp. 107–121.</i>
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**IMAGE – TEXT – CORPUS**  
**IN THE STORIES OF NARCISSUS AND PYGMALION**  
**IN OVID’S *METAMORPHOSES***

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*Abstract:* The article offers a comparative analysis of Ovid’s stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion. The analysis highlights the intertextual link between the two narratives, and uses it as the basis for comparison, focusing on the single aspect: who creates what, and how. The paper concludes that what is at stake in the two texts at a fundamental level can be found in the sphere of aesthetics.

*Keywords:* Ovid, Narcissus, Pygmalion, intertextuality, *imitatio*, *phantasia*, visuality

The recognition and continuous retracing of an intertextual network that could be drawn in the dialogue between Ovid’s own texts with one another and with those of his poet predecessors is an epoch-making result of the last few decades in the Ovid philology.<sup>1</sup> The narratorial incitement for a dialogic reading shows infinite diversity in thematic, motivic and narratological devices. The two texts read in the present paper, the stories of Narcissus (III 407-510) and Pygmalion (X 243-297)<sup>2</sup> in *Metamorphoses*, are connected via the problematics of human art manifest in the desiring gaze’s illusion.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the two narratives<sup>4</sup> continuously keep analogies going, which encourages one to read the

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<sup>1</sup> One of the most significant overviews can be found in: Barchiesi 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Whenever I quote from the Latin text, I use the following edition of *Metamorphoses*: Tarrant 2004.

<sup>3</sup> For the most thoroughly elaborated reading of the poetics of illusion applied to the *oeuvre* of Ovid, see Philip Hardie’s monograph: Hardie 2002.

<sup>4</sup> For the most part, interpreters of *Metamorphoses* mark the Orpheus narrative as the pendant for the story of Pygmalion. The poet – whose song Pygmalion’s story is inscribed into – and the sculptor, in this reading, are par excellence artists, who demonstrate infinite artistic freedom and its creative powers: Viarre 1968; Segal 1972. Irrespective of the Orpheus narrative, see also Solodow, 1988, 219: “The story of Pygmalion [...] demonstrates most vividly the power of artist and his art.” Eleanor Winsor Leach’s interpretation is also built on the Orpheus-Pygmalion analogy, which, in her understanding, turns into its own reverse when Pygmalion falls in love with his creation, and thus ceases to exist as an artist: Leach 1974, 123-125. Charles Segal interrogates

stories not just separately, but in each other's context too.<sup>5</sup> This narrative technique appears in plot structure, as well as – hardly independently – in the intertextual pattern of the two texts forming a dialogue through a series of allusions.<sup>6</sup>

The baseline of the two narratives is the same human gesture: rejection. Even so, the reason for rejection is different in the two texts. Narcissus is haughty (III 354: *tam dura superbia*), who reacts with insensitive dismissal to not only Echo's,<sup>7</sup> but everyone else's approach. Disgusted and offended by the Propoetides' repulsive way of life (X 244: *offensus vitiis*), Pygmalion chooses a life of solitude, and decides to live in complete seclusion.

Aside from the analogies, there is a significant difference between the position of the youth and the sculptor, namely, that Narcissus is placed in *natura*, whereas Pygmalion is situated in an urban, civilized environment. However, the forest's fountain and brook Narcissus comes upon by chance imprison him and cut him off his world, similarly to what happens to Pygmalion after his self-conscious withdrawal. The place where the youth ends up is extraordinary for the same reason as he himself: it is remarkably pretty and above all, intact.<sup>8</sup> The narrator pays particular attention to the latter, strictly speaking, the Narcissus narrative begins with a detailed, six-line-long description<sup>9</sup> of the place (III 407–

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the story of Pygmalion focusing on the creative process of nature and art (in giving form to the body), and highlights that “Pygmalion's miracle is as much about love as art”: Segal 1998, 16–18.

<sup>5</sup> The first contextualization and complex analysis of the Narcissus-Pygmalion analogy was conducted by Gianpiero Rosati (Rosati 1983), then followed by Philip Hardie, who went as far as calling the story of Pygmalion the pendant of the Narcissus narrative: Hardie 2002, 189. More recently, the two narratives were interpreted in each other's context by Jaś Elsner, who sees not the creator or the artist in the figures of Pygmalion and Narcissus (he does not primarily focus on Ovid's representation in the case of the latter), but the onlooker in love, the paradigm of the creative powers of the gaze/reading, and on the whole, the problematics of realism (Pygmalion) and naturalism (Narcissus): Elsner 2007, 113–176.

<sup>6</sup> On the relatedness of allusion and intertextuality, see Hinds 1998. I use allusion in Hinds's understanding, as a term characteristic of a subject with resolute intentions, of the alluding poet himself who enters the narrator's and the recipient's literary discourse: Hinds 1998, 47–51.

<sup>7</sup> Ever since Rosati's complex analysis, there is no question that it was Ovid, who tied the figures and metamorphoses of Echo and Narcissus into a single narrative, organizing the two stories not just in respect of causality, but also intertextuality: Rosati 1983, 20–31. He uses Quintilian's pair of concepts, illusion and irony in approaching Narcissus and Echo's narrative – not independent from Pygmalion's story either: Krupp 2009, 85–120. Even so, in my analysis, I examine the Narcissus storyline uprooted from the complete narrative and severed from the Echo context, which is justified by watching my own marked angle and considerations.

<sup>8</sup> This detail is a typical example of what Stephen Hinds means by saying that Ovid experiments with “the landscaping of myth and the mythologizing of landscape”: Hinds 2006, 146.

<sup>9</sup> Bömer calls it fountain-ekphrasis (“Ekphrasis über die Quelle”): Bömer 1969, 551.

410): the silver-clear, bright fountain has been touched by neither shepherds nor goats, birds, or other animals, and not even boughs have fallen into it. Through a series of negation (the words *neque*, *nulla*, and *nec* appear five times altogether in the first four lines), the underlined intactness of the *locus amoenus* (408–409: *neque ... contigerant*: no one has reached there yet<sup>10</sup>) responds to Narcissus' intactness: *nulli illum iuvenes, nullae tetigere puellae* (355: touched by neither boy, nor girl). In addition, so does the rigidity of the place. Everything around the fountain is wet (411) and cold, the forest blocks any sunlight from reaching the place (412). Before long, the figure of immaculate beauty that shelters an insensitive soul (354) recognizes himself in the unblemished, beautiful vegetation barren of living beings.

In the story of Pygmalion, it is not the path untracked by men, but the sculptor's loneliness that gets special emphasis with its threefold phrasing: *sine coniuge caelebs / vivebat thalamique diu consorte carebat* (X 245-246: without a wife, he lived lonely, missing a partner in his bed for long).

The turning point in both stories is marked by a visual experience and the reaction it triggers. The latter, that is, the fire of love kindled in the two witnesses (III 43, 464, 475; X 244, 252-253)<sup>11</sup> takes form in the same desire and gesture: in touching and kissing the other (III 427-428, 450-451; 453; X 254, 256). My analysis, however, is concerned with this component simply as a metaphor of the effect that unfolds from the spectacle. In what follows, the interpretation concentrates<sup>12</sup> on what ignites such passionate feelings in the two characters: the spectacle itself, the two works of art, and also the manner in which they are created: who creates what, and how?

In the story of Narcissus, everything is a creation of *natura*. The youth is drawn by the extraordinary scenery and the fountain (3. 414: *faciemque loci fontemque secutus*: giving in to the scenery and the fountain's seducement), in which he glimpses the image that captures him: *dumque bibit, visae correptus imagine formae* (416: and while drinking, the double he had glimpsed enraptures him).<sup>13</sup> The sight (*facies*<sup>14</sup>) and its effect (*correptus*) frames this moment

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<sup>10</sup> For all the quotations in the present paper, the English equivalent of my own Hungarian translation is provided by József Szabolcs Fagyal.

<sup>11</sup> Elsner pays special attention to Pygmalion's love, the yearning lover's imagination, which, in the extended contemplation eventually sees what it wishes to see: a real girl: Elsner 2007, 121–131.

<sup>12</sup> Naturally, both stories of Ovid have plenty of interpretations, centered on various viewpoints and considerations; on the reception of Ovid's Narcissus as a Künstler-narrative, see the list of Elsner 2007, 137. On the reception of Ovid's Pygmalion, see: Elsner 2007, 113-115.

<sup>13</sup> Rosati reads this scene in Ovid, just like the entire narrative itself, as a drama of reality and illusion, and on the whole, that of the perception of reality and the loss of identity. Along these lines, Narcissus is a victim not of love, but a sufferer of twofold illusion: acoustic and optic, since

as singularly crucial to the plot. The face that forms (*visae ... formae*) in the scenery (*facies*) turns into an image (*imagine*) in the blink of an eye (*dumque bibit*). The fact that Narcissus views the sight taking form on the water's surface as a work of art is made clear by the naming of the sight, the articulation of its effect on the beholder, and the use of words in both cases. What Narcissus catches a sight of in the water is neither *facies* (face) nor *corpus* (body), but *imago*,<sup>15</sup> a name used in fine arts in reference to the image. Narcissus, however, eyes not his animate, real self, but the image of his own sculpture-self:<sup>16</sup> *imago formae*.<sup>17</sup> The self-image which is like a sculpture made of Parian marble: *ut e Pario formatum marmore signum* (419). In the meantime, this *imago* brings into play further connotations of the word as well. Among them, the meaning 'deceptive image, likeness', which is referred to in the second half of the sentence: *spem sine corpore amat: corpus putat esse, quod unda est* (417: what he likes is not a body, but illusion: he conceives a body in the flow). The same point is reformulated later in *quam cernis, imaginis umbra est* (434: what you are looking at is a shadow-figure), where another meaning of *imago*, 'dead shadow-image' can be noted, amplified by the word *umbra*, which two words, respectively and combined alike, anticipate the narrative's end, the death of Narcissus.<sup>18</sup>

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both the echo and the reflection on the water's surface make him think they belong to someone else: Rosati 1983, 25–28.

<sup>14</sup> For the detailed interpretation of the scene, including the conjoint analysis of *facies* as the frontal appearance of the place and the face to appear soon on the surface, see Krupp 2009, 100–101.

<sup>15</sup> On the complex meaning of *imago* in the entirety of *Metamorphoses* (but with the term always being used in the context of fine arts: sculpture, painting, representation, illusion, mirror image), see Solodow 1988, 205–209.

<sup>16</sup> Krupp discards this interpretation: "Man möchte meinen, dass sich der Vergleich auf das Bild beziehen sollte, das Narcissus erblickt. Dies würde dann bedeuten, dass er sein Spiegelbild betrachtet, als sei es ein Kunstwerk. In den *Metamorphosen* liest man davon jedoch nichts. Im Gegenteil." Still, Narcissus sees a work of art in Krupp's reading as well, but not the marble of Paros, but its imaginary ivory "counterpart" created in fiction, which is constructed by the youth's (or rather, the narrator's) gaze: Krupp 2009, 101-104.

<sup>17</sup> My train of thought on the dichotomy of *forma* and *corpus*, its central role in the production of meaning both in Narcissus' and Pygmalion's story is supported, and at the same time complemented by József Krupp's analysis on the connection between the untouchable form (*forma*) and the material body (*corpus*): Krupp 2009, 91-92.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Hardie sees the precursor and parallel to Ovid's representations of Echo and Narcissus in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, more specifically in its fourth book, which dissects the mechanism of sense perception and delusion. Hardie reads Ovid's narrative as the mythologization and poeticization of this didactic and rational text, while reading Lucretius' theory of *simulacra* and the *simulacrum*'s three maxims into Ovid's narrative: the interplay of meaning between the

In the story of Pygmalion, everything is a product of *ars*. This is another possible interpretation of the story's famous sentence: *ars adeo latet arte sua* (X 252: art lies hid exactly by his own artifice).<sup>19</sup> Pygmalion, appearing as a sculptor<sup>20</sup> through Ovid's myth-forming technique,<sup>21</sup> creates an ivory *kore*-sculpture in his prolonged loneliness, which can be understood as the pendant of the Narcissus narrative's Parian marble *kuros*. Notwithstanding this, the narrator is consistent in describing it as an animate body, which can be equally interpreted as an expression of the sculpture's perfection and as the anticipation of the narrative's ending: *virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas / et, si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri*: (250-251: her face is like that of a real maiden, you would think she lives and is about to move, weren't she withheld by chastity). Pygmalion himself looks at it not as a sculpture, but as a real body (254-255: *saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit / corpus, an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur*: touches it time and again, feeling his work, whether a real body or ivory, and he still refuses to admit it is ivory), and treats his creation as such:<sup>22</sup> gives it gifts (260-263), and embellishes it (263-266). The *virgo*, decorated with dresses, rings, necklaces, earrings and ribbons, presents a whole, unflinching image both of a living and of a sculpture *kore*.

The *imago* floating on the water's surface and wafting between the borderlines of sight and phantasm affects Narcissus like the most dazzling work of art: *adstupet ipse sibi, vultuque inmotus eodem / haeret, ut e Pario formatum marmore signum* (III 418-419: stares at himself in awe, and clings to it unmoving with the same eye, like a Parian marble sculpture). The word *adstupet* is typically used to express one's admiring look at a work of art.<sup>23</sup> The continuation of the sentence though adds remarkable emphasis not only to this reaction, but – as long as one complies with the playful back and forth references truly characteristic of Ovid's poetry – it is a concentration of the progress, at the end

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deceptive image, delusion and the dead- or shadow-image: Hardie 1988 and Hardie 2002, 150-165.

<sup>19</sup> According to Rosati (1983, 64), the sentence formulates art's power to create illusions.

<sup>20</sup> The most widespread metapoetic reading of the Pygmalion narrative interprets Ovid's text as a Künstler-narrative: Leach 1974, 125; Szilágyi 1982/a, 43-45; Rosati 1983, 64; Anderson 1989; Galinsky 1999, 310-313; Hardie 2002, 189: "Pygmalion is a figure for the visual artist, and also for the poet"; Elsner 2007, 121-125.

<sup>21</sup> On the sources of Ovid and his agency in forming myths, see Bömer 1980, 93-97; Szilágyi 1982/a, 37-41.

<sup>22</sup> Some interpretations argue that these are symptoms of the sculptor's passionate love turning into madness: Segal 1998, 18: "Ovid clearly marks these gestures as silly, and in another mood they could be signs of incipient madness. [...] this ending also leaves it ambiguous whether Pygmalion is just a lucky fool or a creative genius." Elsner 2007, 130: "we might say that Pygmalion is either the recipient of a divine miracle or finally and certifiably mad."

<sup>23</sup> On the ekphrastic analogy of Narcissus and Aeneas, see Hardie 2002, 146-148.

of which Narcissus turns into what he really sees. First he casts an admiring look (*adstupet*) at himself and sees it as an other (*ipse sibi*), then clings (*haeret*) to the sight (*vultu*) unmoving (*inmotus*) with a fixed, steady gaze (*vultu ... eodem*), to a degree that eventually the sight of him, too, has the impression of a sculpture (*ut e Pario formatum marmore signum*).

The severalfold emphatic artificial and artistic quality of Pygmalion's narrative provides a sharp contrast to the fully natural world of the Narcissus narrative and to its mirror image formed in nature, perfectly imitating and duplicating the perceivable world (III 420: *spectat humi positus geminum, sua lumina, sidus*: lying on the ground he glances at his twin-born star, at his eyes). Pygmalion successfully carves (248: *sculpsit*) the snowy ivory (X 247-248: *niveum ... ebur*) with admirable artistic expertise (247: *mira feliciter arte*), and forms a figure (248: *formamque dedit*) that does not exist in reality: *qua femina nasci / nulla potest* (248-249: a woman that cannot be born). The generally accepted interpretation of the sentence, based on the understanding of *forma* as 'beautiful form',<sup>24</sup> sees the sculpture-girl's unmatched beauty as a display that not even nature can create a woman like that. The text, at any rate, talks not about beauty or a beautiful shape, but such a form, such an image of something that cannot spontaneously come into being in the real world. It can only come into existence in the realm of arts, for it is the isolated studio in the sculptor's urban world where the creation is born; a fully material *opus* (249: *operisque sui concepit amorem*: and he fell in love with his own creation). This *opus*, however, is never called *imago* or *signum* or *simulacrum* by the narrator, but *virgo* (250, 275, 292: maiden) and *puella* (280: girl). Pygmalion views the sculpture-girl with the same amazement Narcissus casts at his own image. *Miratur* (252), as another typical expression of looking at art, not merely articulates an identical effect, but puts the protagonists in the same position: they are shown as onlookers of a work of art. The focalization of the two gazes concurs. Narcissus drinks from the fountain lying on his stomach (III 414: *procubuit*, 420: *humi positus*), when he glimpses the image, and continues to look at it in the same position hereafter. Pygmalion takes the sculpture-girl to his bed (X 267-269), and lying on her (281: *incumbens*, 292-294: *virgo / ... timidum ad lumina lumen / attollens pariter cum caelo vidit amantem*: the maiden / ... raising her timid eyes at the lights, discerns her love together with the sky, at the same time), he notices that the ivory body has started to lose its hardness.

What Narcissus spectates is seemingly himself: *spectat humi positus geminum, sua lumina, sidus* (III 420: lying on the ground he glances at his twin-born star, at his eyes). The preceding sentence, nonetheless, refers to the

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<sup>24</sup> Theodorakopoulos 1999, 144; Elsner 2007, 124.

statuesqueness of the boy lying on the ground and leaning over the pool of water: *ut e Pario formatum marmore signum*. (419: like a statue carved in Parian marble). Bringing into play the duplicative aspect of the Ovidian narrative again, if one interprets *geminum* not simply as an epithet of the word *sidus* following it, but also as that of the preceding *signum*, and combines the two halves, the resulting meaning begins with *adstupet* (418), the admiring contemplation of a sculpture: *signum / spectat humi positus geminum* (419-420) – he is looking at his sculpture-double, lying on the ground. This interpretation is supported by the subsequent lines (421-424) as well, since based on the description, the spectacle is nothing else, but a marble *kuros*, with hair worthy of Bacchus and Apollo (*et dignos Baccho, dignos et Apolline crines*), with shoulders like ivory (*eburnea colla*), and his snow-white youthful face (*impubesque genas*) made even more resplendent by blush (*decusque / oris et in niveum mixtum candore ruborem*). The narrator repeatedly calls Narcissus' interpretation of the image an error<sup>25</sup> (431: *oculos ... incitat error*: an error that excites his gaze; 447: *tantus tenet error amantem*: an error that restrains the lover), and the boy imprudent (425: *se cupit imprudens*: imprudently craves after himself), because he does not realize that what he sees and yearns for (430: *quid videat, nescit*), the boy viewed in unreachable proximity does not exist (433: *quod petis, est nusquam*: that which you yearn for is nowhere to be found). He reckons it is a real body he sees (417: *corpus putat esse*; 432: *credula*), but it is an image (*imago*: 414, 432, 461; 430: *simulacra*), in fact, the reflected shadow of an image (434: *Ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est.*). Along these lines, the water's surface, nature imitates a sculpture, a work of art. Akin to gods, uniquely beautiful (454: *puer unice*), the *imago* of Narcissus appears as a still Parian sculpture, but vanishes as soon as the corpus comes to life (432: *quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?*: why do you snatch after volatile images in vain?).

The metamorphoses that close the two narratives are also the analogies and inverses of each other.<sup>26</sup> The signs of life, the blushed cheeks and vitality disappear from Narcissus' body when it is represented as a sculpture (III 491-493: *et neque iam color est mixto candore rubori, / nec vigor et vires et quae modo*

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<sup>25</sup> In the *error* of Narcissus – and several other characters of *Metamorphoses* – Rosati (1983, 39) sees the reaffirmation and illustration of the epic's main motif: the changeability of things, and as a result, the expression of the spectacle's illusory nature.

<sup>26</sup> In Rosati's reading, the Pygmalion narrative of *Metamorphoses*, just like the myth of Narcissus, features the opposition of reality and illusion as its main motif, but the analogy turns into its own inverse in the former. In the story of Pygmalion, the illusion of the girl's realistic qualities turn into reality, whereas in the story of Narcissus, reality understood as an other turns into an illusion: Rosati 1983, 61-66.

*visa placebant, / nec corpus remanet*: the blush mixed with bright whiteness has vanished, so has *vim* and *vigor*, everything that Echo loved, his body was no longer alive either), but become visible and palpable on Pygmalion's sculpture, once it is shown as a body (X 283-284: *temptatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore / subsidit digitis*: he touches it, the ivory softens, its rigidity loosens, and his fingers make a dent in it, 293: *erubuit*: she blushed). The eyes of Narcissus admiring the view, or rather, his own image, are closed by death (III 503: *lumina mors clausit domini mirantia formam*: his eyes that are admiring the image of their master are closed by death). Pygmalion's *virgo* opens her eyes and raises her head in the invigorating light (X 294-295: *ad lumina lumen / attollens*). The wax-simile present in both narratives partly becomes the metaphor of the metamorphoses (moving in opposite directions), which, in both cases, result in what comprises the essence of the two characters.<sup>27</sup> The body of Narcissus becomes what Pygmalion's sculpture used to be: a form (III 493: *nec corpus remanet*; 503: *lumina mors clausit domini mirantia formam*). Yet the image of wax melting in the sun (III 487-489: *ut intabescere flavae ... cerae ... solent*: as the yellow wax melts), or softening in the sun (X 284-285: *ut Hymettia sole / cera remollescit*: as the Hymettian wax grows soft under the sun) not only provides the two narratives a visual image, but also evokes the process of creating and forming a sculpture, that is, it reflects upon questions related to the aesthetics of art and creation.

In the story of Narcissus, it is *natura* itself that takes the role of the creator, or to borrow Pliny the Elder's words, it is *natura omnium artifex* (*Nat.* II 3: nature, master artificer of all), or *artifex natura* (*Nat.* II 66).<sup>28</sup> In Pygmalion's story, the sculptor is the *artifex*, and as a matter of fact, the *mira ars*. The created product is the same in both cases: the human body in the form of a *kuros* and a *kore* sculpture. Nevertheless, the body appears in the two narratives not as a biological entity, but as a construction, which has a stake in the sphere of aesthetics. The narrator uses the noun *forma* in naming the body as an aesthetic construction. What Narcissus glimpses and falls in love with is the image of a work of art, an *imago formae* (III 416: *visae correptus imagine formae*). The youth admires it even in the moment of his death: *lumina mors clausit domini mirantia formam* (503). *Forma*, in this case, does not exercise its full power in the production of meaning as 'visible form, outward appearance' (its most

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<sup>27</sup> In Solodow's reading (1988, 176-183) every Ovidian metamorphosis reveals the character's essence: "the Ovidian concept of metamorphosis as clarification" (183). On the interfusion of petrification–sculpture–metamorphosis, and how they remain unresolved and open, see Feldherr 2006.

<sup>28</sup> A description of nature analogous with this can be found in *Metamorphoses* as well: *artifices natura manus admovit* (XV 218).



common meaning), but as ‘an image created in the likeness of something / someone’.<sup>29</sup> It is the same meaning Ovid uses elsewhere: *colitur pro Iove forma Iovis* (*Pont.* II 8. 62: instead of respecting Jupiter, they respect his image). Narcissus’ body, resembling a Parian marble sculpture, gives a definite form to this meaning. The *forma*, whose *imago* the youth stares at all the while is a sculpture carved in Parian marble: *e Pario formatum marmore signum*.

In Pygmalion’s story, the sculptor displays miraculous artistic skills (X 247: *mira arte*) in carving the lifeless material provided by nature, ivory into a form (248: *formam dedit*) that *natura* cannot create (248-249: *qua femina nasci nulla potest*). In respect to the interpretation of *forma*, it also matters that Pygmalion withdraws into solitude exactly because he feels repulsion and indignation against the unvirtuous women created by *natura*: *offensus vitiis, quae plurima menti / femineae natura dedit* (244-245: offended by the sins that nature mostly gave to women’s heart). Wicked women are the creations of nature: *natura dedit*. The immaculate and perfect work is a product of arts: *arte formam dedit*. The product created by *natura* is not perfect, unlike that of *ars*. Referring to the former as *femina* and to the latter as *virgo* is not just a formulation of bodily and moral uncleanliness–cleanliness, but much rather a definite distinction between the natural and the artistic. Pygmalion’s *kore* coming to life is most conventionally explained – and translated<sup>30</sup> – with the extraordinary beauty of this created form. On the other hand, the phrase was in limited use as *figura pulchra* (fine appearance) or *pulchritudo* (beauty),<sup>31</sup> which makes this interpretation far from self-evident.<sup>32</sup> Within Pygmalion’s narrative, and understood in its context built up with the Narcissus narrative, *forma* here can mean<sup>33</sup> ‘an image created in the likeness of something’. Pygmalion formed an image out of ivory, one that is perfect, even though – or exactly because – it is likened to, but

<sup>29</sup> *ThLL* VI/1, 1082: *imago ad similitudinem alicuius rei formata*; a.) *generatim: forma similis corpori animalium vel rerum*. *OLD* (1992) 722: likeness, image: b.) of artistic representation.

<sup>30</sup> Miller 1984: “Meanwhile, with wondrous art he successfully carves a figure out of snowy ivory, giving it a beauty more perfect than that of any woman ever born.” Lafaye 1989: “Cependant, grâce à une habilité merveilleuse, il réussit à sculpter dans l’ivoire blanc comme la neige un corps de femme d’une telle beauté que la nature n’en peut créer de semblable et il devint amoureux de son oeuvre.”

<sup>31</sup> *ThLL* VI/1, 1072: *sensu limitato: de figura pulchra, i. q. pulchritudo*. *OLD* (1992) 722: 5. Fine and handsome appearance, beauty, good looks.

<sup>32</sup> One may suspect the same thought behind Erich Rösch’s (Rösch 1983) translation too: “Weißes Elfenbein schnitzte indes er mit glücklicher Kunst und / gab ihm eine Gestalt, wie sie nie ein geborenes Weib kann / haben.”

<sup>33</sup> Similarly to the description of stones becoming people and taking a human form in the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha: *videri / forma potest hominis, sed, uti de marmore coepta, / non exacta satis* (*Ov., Met.* I 404–406: it might look like a human form, but similar to when the shaping of marble begins, it is not perfectly finished enough).

not fully identical with the female body created by nature. The master created the perfect *imago* of femininity in respect to outward appearance, immaculate purity, as well as artistic factors.

In the light of these arguments, perhaps it is safe to claim that the stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion in *Metamorphoses* thematize the problematics of *natura* and *ars*, and *imitatio* and *phantasia*.<sup>34</sup> The two narratives interpret these aesthetic possibilities in art and artistic creation within their own narrative frames, and also make it complete through their mutual dialogue. The two texts, continuously reflecting on each other, position the relationship between *natura* and *ars* neither in opposition nor in hierarchical order, but follow a particular Ovidian interpretation, which is articulated in other stories of *Metamorphoses* as well, and maybe not by chance, it is done so in the context of the *locus amoenus*. In the description of the caves of Thetis, it is formulated as follows: *est specus in medio, natura factus, an arte / ambiguum, magis arte tamen* (XI 235-236: there is a cave in the middle, the creation of nature or art, it is uncertain, but more likely it is art). Likewise in the story of Actaeon, when the sacred grove's grotto is described: *simulaverat / artem ingenio natura suo* (III 158-159: nature imitated art with its own ingeniousness).<sup>35</sup>

As if the other *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius' novel reflected on this sentence when it describes the portico of a luxuriant house, where Diana's Parian marble sculpture stands in front of an artificial grotto.<sup>36</sup> The cluster of grapes hanging

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<sup>34</sup> On the urban culture and taste in Ovid's time (as revealed in the literature of the Flavian period), and on the contemporary evaluation of *ars* and *natura*'s relationship in detail, see Rosati 1983, 68-93. It must be emphasized though that in her interpretation of Pygmalion, Rosati writes not about the thematization of *phantasia*-aesthetics, but its occasional manifestation, when the artist molds not the imitation of reality, but its inner idea, see Rosati 1983, 83, 74. footnote: "Egli realizza l'idea di donna che porta dentro di sé, senza ispirarsi a modelli esterni." It must also be highlighted that János György Szilágyi calls the *Metamorphoses* story of Pygmalion Ovid's work, exactly because he understands it as Ovid's most personal confession on artistic creation, whose main concern is to imitate the phenomena of life, the projection of the products of inner visions (*phantasia*), instead of *mimesis*: Szilágyi 1982/a, 42. Szilágyi thus uses the term in the sense of romantic creative fantasy. My interpretation of Pygmalion differs from the phrasing of both scholars' in the understanding of *phantasia*-aesthetics in Ovid's time. As it becomes clear in the following paragraphs, the term was not in use to mean 'creative imagination unrestricted by reality' in the first century, or the entirety of classical antiquity, see Sheppard 2015, 361.

<sup>35</sup> For other examples in the text, see Rosati 1983, 70-72.

<sup>36</sup> In the development of the intertextual connection between the two texts, it might be significant that in the description of Apuleius, Actaeon's sculpture and his dogs, that is, his story becomes visible. In Apuleius' ekphrasis, Barchiesi and Hardie emphasizes not only the conscious choice of the Ovidian story of Actaeon, but also the essential sameness of the adapted metamorphosis-motif. Therefore, the metamorphosis in the two Actaeon narratives, which results in an existence experienced with a human mind, but in an animal's body, is interpreted as the demon-

from the cave is such a perfect replication of reality that at this point art almost seems to surpass nature: *quas ars aemula naturae veritati similes explicuit* (II 4: which art, rival of nature made equal to the real). Apuleius thus echoes the aesthetic and artistic thesis unwavering throughout antiquity, the one about the perfection of creative nature as a yardstick that cannot be exceeded – for which an ample set of examples was handed down in the artist anecdotes of Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis Historia*.<sup>37</sup>

Pliny the Younger’s description of his estate in Etruria (*Ep.* V 6), however, establishes a balanced evaluation of the relationship between *natura* and *ars*, which cannot be seen in other contemporary works. As the villa blends into the valley, the spectacle portrayed from above resembles not so much a real landscape, but rather a remarkably beautiful picture: *Neque enim terras tibi sed formam aliquam ad eximiam pulchritudinem pictam videberis cernere* (V 6, 13: For it shall appear, as you saw not a real landscape, but an especially beautiful painting.). There is a meadow along the way leading to the villa, which nature created no less delightful than what artifice produced in the description mentioned above (V 6. 18: *Pratum inde non minus natura quam superiora illa arte visendum.*).

In Pliny the Younger’s description, *natura*, acting as *ars* and seemingly equal to *ars*, is the manifestation of the same aesthetic paradigm shift as what can be observed in Ovid’s categorical – and in that sense unique<sup>38</sup> – statement on nature imitating art. In the story of Narcissus, the mode of creation is imitation. *Natura* itself creates the image of a work of art, of a Parian marble sculpture, the beauty of which cannot be surpassed. The exact, and as such, reproducing and duplicating imitation of visible reality, the traditional practice of *imitation* is not possible in Ovid’s narrative. Because *natura* is continuous movement and change. Nature is *fugax*, like the rippling surface of water (III 432: *quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?*), in which no constant exists,<sup>39</sup> only the moment that suspends time in sculpture-like stillness.

The change in art criticism in the first century is far from a general paradigm shift. That being said, Ovid’s and Pliny the Younger’s texts clearly document

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stration of the self-reflexive relationship between the author, the narrative voice and the character: Barchiesi, Hardie 2010, 74–76.

<sup>37</sup> For details, see Darab 2014/a, Darab 2014/ b.

<sup>38</sup> Solodow 1988, 210: “that nature imitates art [...] No one before Ovid, so far as I know, ever conceived this”.

<sup>39</sup> The lack of fixedness and permanence is a worldview and also the poetics that determine the entirety of *Metamorphoses*, which is already formulated at the beginning of the epic, when the creation of the world is described. As Stephen M. Wheeler notes, the *imago mundi* exteriorized in the Ovidian cosmogony is not a fixed and ultimate form, but a matter subjected to the transformative powers of human and divine passions: Wheeler 1995, 117.

another sort of thinking about the sub- and superordination of artificially created and natural reality, and about the judgment of artistic products.<sup>40</sup> Their preferred phenomenon has been around since Homer,<sup>41</sup> it is only its denomination, the first use of the term *phantasia* that can be tied to the first century, to Pseudo-Longinus' work entitled *On the Sublime* (*Subl.* XV 1). For Longinus, *phantasia* is connected to the visualization of the orator's and the poet's language use, and to the verbally constructed spectacle taking form in the mind of the audience. Longinus' (*Subl.* XV 9) and Quintilian's (*Inst.* VI 2. 29-32) fundamentally rhetorical descriptions of *phantasia* rhyme perfectly: they both write about visualizing images and positioning them in the recipients' mind, and also about the vivacity and emotional impact of these images, their dazzling effects, which is closely connected to *enargeia* in rhetoric. Consequently, it is connected to the visualizing quality of language, which forms the text's listener/reader into a 'spectator', similarly how *ekphrasis* uses the power of *enargeia* with the intent of visualization.<sup>42</sup> The act of 'seeing', called into being by the perception that follows sensation, is nothing else, but personal visualization – this is what Longinus and Quintilian call *phantasia*.

In Ovid's narrative, Pygmalion is the creator and the recipient of the sculpture in one person. As an artificer, he carves the image of the oh-so-desired femininity – imitating its images recalled from memory (X 247: *mira feliciter arte*) –, and does so perfectly (248-249: *formamque dedit, qua femina nasci / nulla potest*). That which enlivens the inanimate material put into form (248: *sculpsit ebur formamque dedit*), that which turns ivory into flesh (289: *corpus erat*) is Pygmalion's gaze: his vision appearing through the course of his prolonged contemplation, in which the maiden (275: *eburnea virgo*) turns into an image that evokes girls (280: *simulacra suae puellae*) – of otherwise not immaculate background. The two-way agency of *phantasia* becomes visible in this story: the creation of the sculpture that produces the illusion of reality, and the created sculpture appearing as real are both products of subjective visualization, they are products of *phantasia*.

In the first century, *phantasia* became a fixed term for visualization in literary and visual art theory alike. Quintilian uses it in reference to the images evoked through the ability of visualization and those appealing to the audience;

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<sup>40</sup> On the matter of art imitating nature, and nature imitating art, Solodow writes about Ovid's shift of emphasis favoring the latter: Solodow 1988, 207-214. Hardie addresses the ever-thinning borderline between reality and illusion in Ovid, and the eventual transgression of said border in Pygmalion's story: Hardie 2002, 186.

<sup>41</sup> On the historical overview of the phenomenon and the term's use, see Sheppard 2015/a.

<sup>42</sup> On the subject of *enargeia*, *ekphrasis* and *phantasia*, see Goldhill 2007; Webb 2010<sup>2</sup>, 107–130.

this is – as he notes (*Inst.* VI 2, 29) – what the Greeks call *phantasia* and Romans *visiones*. Pliny the Younger also assigns great importance to the villa’s description because of visualization: *cum totam villam oculis tuis subicere conamur* (V 6, 44: when I attempt to disclose the entire villa to you). Ovid describes himself in Tomis, as one who visualizes Rome, his home, his wife and everyone absent in images (*Pont.* I 8, 34: *cunctaque mens oculis pervidet illa suis*: all these I see with my mind’s eye).<sup>43</sup>

Philostratus of Athens says (*VA.* VI 19) that *mimesis* puts into form what he has seen, whereas *phantasia* also puts into form what he has not seen, since it is able to create from what has an actual real world referent. Pygmalion excludes women from his life for a long while, then creates a *corpus* in reference to the truly real female body, but uses his own *phantasia* in bringing forth its vitality, chastity and the femininity made apparent in the beauty of purity: *formam dedit*. Gianpiero Rosati, the unavoidable monographer on the topic of Narcissus and Pygmalion, finds it unlikely that Ovid consciously followed the norms of *phantasia*-aesthetics, in spite of the fact that in Ovidian poetry, and in the elegies of *Ars Amatoria* above all, Rosati himself notes the presence of this aesthetic effort.<sup>44</sup>

In recent decades, those analyses signify the most notable paradigm shift in the Ovid philology which recognized and highlighted the intellectual depth of Ovid’s “playful” poetry.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, if one reads the narrative of Daedalus and Icarus in *Metamorphoses* as the allegory of following a model and the human and artistic possibilities of the individual’s own path,<sup>46</sup> the rivalry of Minerva and Arachne as the competition of two artistic styles,<sup>47</sup> the contention of Apollo and Marsyas as a clash between lyre and elegy,<sup>48</sup> then there is no exaggeration in saying that the stories of Narcissus and Pygmalion stage the problematics of *mimesis* and *phantasia*, the problematics of *imitatio* and *visio*. If one sees the choice of human and artistic freedom in the flight of Icarus in *Metamorphoses*, the assertive artist’s autonomic art in Arachne and her tapestry’s imagery, the artistic and human paradigm of elegy and its poet in the daring

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<sup>43</sup> Ov., *Tr.* III 4, 55-62: *Sic tamen haec adsunt, ut quae contingere non est / corpore: sunt animo cuncta videnda meo*. Yet all these are present, though cannot be touched physically: I must see everything through my mind’s eye.

<sup>44</sup> Rosati 1983, 83.

<sup>45</sup> In his commentary written to Book X in 1980, Bömer provides an explanation for the line *formam dedit, qua femina nasci / nulla potest*: “Das sind keine Äußerungen einer künstlerischen Weltanschauung, sondern eine Frage poetisch-technischer Variation, die hier zu einer »paradoxalen« Formulierung greift” (Bömer 1980, 98).

<sup>46</sup> Ritoók 1995.

<sup>47</sup> Leach 1974, 102-104; Szilágyi 1982/b.

<sup>48</sup> Darab 2016.

competition shown by Marsyas, then it is not an overstatement to see the incarnation of a new aesthetic in Pygmalion's *opus*. A new aesthetic of Ovid, who, in the epilogue to *Metamorphoses*, views the work created from his sources and his own *phantasia*, like Pygmalion his self-created *virgo*: *Iamque opus exegi*. (XV 871) – And now I have finished my work.

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ISSN 0418453X